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SERGEANT-MAJOR

DO-YOUR-BEST

Of Darkington

GENERAL BOOTH.

1485. e. 182.

SERGEANT-MAJOR DO-YOUR-BEST

OF DARKINGTON No. I.

SKETCHES OF THE INNER LIFE OF A SALVATION ARMY CORPS.

BY

GENERAL BOOTH.



THE SALVATION ARMY BOOK DEPARTMENT.

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**THE SALVATION ARMY PRINTING WORKS,
ST. ALBANS.**



PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following Papers were originally published in a Magazine circulating among the Local Officers of The Salvation Army. As will be seen at a glance, they were written with the special view of interesting and instructing the particular class for whom they were designed in some of the more important aspects of Character and Duty. Thinking that they may be useful if embodied in a permanent form, they are sent forth in this volume.

All of the characters sketched have their counterpart in Salvation Army life, and such events as those described are constantly occurring in connexion with our work.

For the benefit of strangers to our Organisation, I may explain that there are over 50,000 persons fighting under our Flag who come under the designation of "Local Officer." Many of these have been recruited from the humbler walks of life, and labour without fee or reward, beyond the satisfaction which is ever derived from time and energy spent in doing good.

WILLIAM BOOTH.

LONDON, July, 1906.

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CHAPTER I.

WHY I LIKE OUR CAPTAIN.

Now, you see, it is a fact, and there is no mistake about it, that I do really like our Captain, and I shall be downright sorry when the time comes for him to move off.

I have been in this Corps ever since I was converted, which is just six years come next November. I can remember the time exactly, because our Jack, my eldest boy, went to America a week before, and I got so excited that I had a week's spree over it, and on the Sunday afternoon the Salvationists—God bless 'em!—picked me up, half boozed, just as I was coming out of “The Swan with Two Necks,” and dragged me to the Hall in the procession, whether I would or not; and there they put it into me so hot about the fool I was making of myself in throwing my soul away, that I couldn't help feeling as though I was hearing my dear old father talking again to me as he used to do. He has

been dead and gone these twenty years. I was a bad lad, but he was a good man—God bless him !

I went straight home that afternoon, and had a cup of tea and a wash-up, and then I said to Sarah—that's my missis, and a good wife she's been to me—“Sarah,” says I.

“ Well, what are you on with now ? ” says she.

“ Well,” I says, “ I’m going to The Salvation Army.”

And she says: “ I don’t believe you ; but it’s time you went somewhere. Haven’t you been spending the bit of money we had laid up for the funerals, and such things, and wasting your time and making me miserable long enough ? ”

“ Well,” I says, “ will you come with me ? ” And she says: “ That I will, if you are going to them people.”

And away we went, and that very night we knelt at the penitent-form together, and I really believe we both got properly saved; and I chucked up the drink and the devil at a go, and came over on to the Lord’s side, which was a fine job for the missis and the youngsters.

Well, as I was saying, I have been in this Corps ever since, and I’ve known every blessed Captain that we’ve had, and very good ones

they've been. But you know as how that some must be better than others; though I always stand by our Officers, whether they come up to my mark or whether they don't; because, as I tells my comrades, if some of 'em arn't exactly what we would like 'em to be, it won't make 'em any better by pulling 'em to pieces.

This Captain we have now is more to my fancy than any of the lot, and no disrespect to any of 'em. He's a real beauty, without any paint. God bless him, body and soul—that's what I've got to say!

"Why do I fancy him?" you ask. Well, I think I can tell you; and to put it plain, there are several things that lifts him up in my opinion. I won't "enlarge" upon them, as Captain Windy used to say about his last point, when he had been going on for three-quarters of an hour, and Jim Snorehard had woke up, and was getting his hat ready to rush off; especially as what I'm about to say is going to the Officers; and I know some of them as are good talkers, but poor listeners.

They'd like you to hear *them* for ever, but when you get talking a bit yourself, they are soon on to you with "Amen, Amen!" like Captain Windy, who, whenever I was giving him a bit of my mind, always used to say, "Cut

it short, Sergeant-Major, for you know what the song says,

‘Time is earnest, passing by.’”

But you must have patience with me if I am going to make things plain to you, or else I can’t do it. And here goes; and what I have got to say is, that the reason why I like our Captain is :—

1. *Because he is a good man.* I don’t exactly know how it’s made up; but I always feel when I come alongside of him, whether it is in the Open-Air or in the Hall, or whether it’s when we’re having a fight to get some poor sinner into the fountain, or whether it’s when we are reckoning up the money, or doing business together, that he is a downright, good-hearted fellow.

Then, you see, you can always believe what he says. You can’t think of him doing “the big” about his relations, or his superior bringing up, and such things, like Captain Swellum used to do, bless him! And he had many good points, had Captain Swellum; but he used to come it a little too much about what he had given up to come into the work. When our Captain says “A spade’s a spade,” you can reckon on it being so: you can’t think of him deceiving you about anything. If he says that he will meet you for visiting the pubs, or selling “The War Crys,”

or going to see anybody that is sick or dying, you can reckon that if so be as he's alive and able to crawl, he'll be there.

Yes, our Captain's a good man. I consider him a real holy man. You can feel it when you are with him. The influence kind o' comes out of him, not only when he gives his experience in the Free and Easy, but all the time. He seems to live in prayer, and love to God and the poor sinners.

When he tells us, in the Holiness Meeting, that he has got "the blessing," and loves God with all his heart, and his neighbour as himself, it all seems so natural that you feel it is true ; and I always feel like getting up, and saying : "Yes, Captain, I believe you; I have never seen anything that contradicts that bit you have just been saying." No, he seems to live in prayer and love, and he is what I call a holy man.

2. *Then there is another thing about our Captain that I like, and that is, he works.* My word, doesn't he tug at it ! Summer and winter he's the same. He's never in bed after seven in the morning, and he trots about the town, after everybody that he can do any good to, all through the day; and he sweats away at the meetings at night, until, sometimes, I should not

be surprised if he was to drop down where he stands. Whatever people may think about him, everybody knows that he works.

We had Captain Gentleton here last year, and he was a very good man, I believe. The Divisional Officer said he was, when he introduced him. But, then, he wasn't strong, and his wife wasn't strong, and his children wasn't strong either, and the poor fellow had always to be taking care of himself, or nursing the family, or doing it for them, so that people somehow got the notion that he took things a little easy—which I never believed, because I make it a part of my religion not to think evil things of our Officers.

But the roughs never shout after our Captain, as they did after Captain Gentleton, "Go and work!" which used to hurt his feelings very much, and made me very sorry for him; besides, it was a kind of reflection on the Corps. I hope he is in better health now, wherever he is, although I think as how he was having a furlough somewhere the last time I heard about him.

But I was saying that our Captain *works*; and I do think myself, sometimes, that he goes rather too far for his strength; because, as our Sarah puts it, he's not strong; and she's a knowing little woman; although she's not so little either, as she tells me sometimes.

"Steve," she says, "what good should I have been to tug after thee and thy nine children, if I'd been little?"

But then, you know, it is only a way I have of talking about her.

Well, Sarah says that the Captain's wife told her the other day, when she was trying to get Sarah to persuade the Captain to have a furlough, "Yes, I do think," she said, "that John goes to extremes, for he works all through the day as hard as he can, and he never turns in at night while he can sit up any longer; and I say to him sometimes: 'Do you want to leave me a widow, and the three children, the eldest of whom is only five years, all alone in the world?' But he answers nothing, except it is that he must do his duty. Well, I suppose the Captain's right, as he mostly is, in my way of thinking. You can't do your duty without work, and a good deal of it."

Now, I don't want to make any reflections, especially upon Officers, because it is my solemn duty, as Sergeant-Major of this Corps, to protect their character again all comers, which I mean to do, as long as I am in this important office. But, as I say, there's a difference between one and another—at least, I've always found it so.

There was Captain Slowman, for one. He was

here for six months, and the Corps didn't get on very well either; but he was a very nice man, and I never had a wry word with him. But, bless you, when it come to work, he was quite different to the Captain we have got now. I never could get him to visit anybody that was sick, that lived any distance out, or go after any backsliders, or do anything extra like; and when I talked to him about it he would say:—

“ You don't know what a great deal of littererry work a Captain has to do. It takes me till dinner-time, every day, to fill up my forms, and keep a journal of my work, and write letters to comrades, and make articles for ‘The War Cry’”—which, as how as I never could find any of ‘em in the dear old paper; but I suppose they didn't put his name to them. And then, when I said, “ Captain, couldn't you turn out sooner in the afternoon? ” he said he had to prepare his discourses, which was very important.

Well, I asked our Captain the other day how it was he managed to get all his reports filled up, and all the littererry stuff done, and yet be out all hours of the day, and night into the bargain?

“ Well,” says he, “ Sergeant-Major”—he always gives me my title, and that's one reason why I believe that our Sarah is so partial to him—“ Sergeant-Major,” says he, “ my wife has not

been quite as spry since our last baby was born, and so I turn out first of a morning, and makes a downright good cup of that 'Triumph' tea in that little old brown teapot, and I takes it up to her; and then I gets one for myself; and then I go for the reports, and gets them all done and squared up by the time the missis has the breakfast ready."

But I won't say any more. I reckon I've proved that our Captain is a real hard-working man.

3. *The third reason why I fancy our Captain is, that he is so kind.* You can see his love for you in his very face, and hear it in his talk; and, best of all, it comes out in such a many little ways in his life.

He's not proud, nor uppish, nor above anybody. The roughs in the street speak to him as if he belonged to them—which he always reckons he does. They say: "Good morning, Captain; how are yer to-day? Keep yer pecker up!" and he always answers them back with a kind word.

And then he's always ready to help anybody about the place, and does lots of things that some people don't reckon to be in the regular work of a Captain.

You should see how he visits the Soldiers, and

anybody else that's sick; and how kind he is to the old folks, and how he pats the children on the head, and speaks to them just as if they were his own relations. And I believe he drags miles every week to visit poor old cripples that can't get to the Citadel at all. And then he thinks nothing of helping anybody with their work. Why, I've known him carry an old woman's bundle to the station, and wheel an old man's barrow up the hill.

And isn't he just at home advising people on their troubles. He has such a kind way about it that our poor Soldiers go and tell him when they're stuck fast as would not get up courage to go and talk to many Captains.

He is what I call regler kind, and you can't help but love him—at least, I can't; and, if I was a Captain, I would try and do just that sort of thing myself, because I know that it makes people pray for you, and work in the meetings, and sell "Crys," and do something in the Harvest Festivals, and put something into the box at the collection, and all that kind of thing. He's not grand enough for some folks that I know of, but he is just my sort. Three cheers for our Captain !

CHAPTER II.

MEETINGS.

ANOTHER reason why I like our Captain is, because he makes good Meetings. We always have a good time when he's at the Hall. Is he always there? Why, no, I should think he isn't. Where is he? Well, he has got two Outposts, which he works with all his might. Why, ours is as good as a Circle Corps, and some of our Soldiers don't altogether like it, because he often goes off, and leaves his Lieutenant and your humble servant to do our own concern as best we can; and some of them they say as how as if they pay the salary of a Captain, they ought to have all his services; which seems to me very selfish, and I don't like it. But, then, the Captain thinks the Outpost's all right, and that's enough for me.

But, I was saying, when you interrupted me, that we always have good times when he's at the Hall. I don't know how it is, either, for he's not what you would call a great preacher. He can't

keep at it a long time, and say lots of fine things you can't understand, and he never uses hard words that you don't know what they mean. He is nowhere in the running alongside of Captain Spin-it-out in these matters; but what he does say goes into your stomach, and fetches the water out of your eyes, and makes you feel ashamed of the bit of religion you've got, and resolve you'll get more before the day is out.

And then he can't come up to Captain Melodian at singing a solo, nohow; but, still, my word, he makes everybody else sing.

Why, there's my poor old mother—God bless her! she's been a dear old soul to me as was a deal of trouble to her before I was saved—Granny, the children call her, for she is getting on in years now, and it takes two sticks and a quarter of an hour to get her to the Hall; but the Captain makes mother sing, I can tell you! She has only got two teeth left in her head, and it's a cracking kind of sound that comes out of her mouth when she's done her best; but she enjoys it, and it does her good.

And, then, he can't come near to Captain Wrestler at long prayers; but I always pray when our Captain does, whether he's long or short; and, curious like, I always want to go on when he leaves off.

Then, he is not much to look at. He made me think of David and Goliath when I saw him the other day standing alongside of Major Pull-the-house-down, who was here boozing the Grace-before-meat Boxes. But, then, the Major has got uncommonly stout lately. My! he is a weight. He broke our bit of a rail down a-leaning on it, and I was glad the old platform didn't go as well. Our Sarah says that she's sure he ought to have more exercise, or he'll have a hoppolektic fit, or something of that kind, some day.

But, never mind, if our Captain is not much to look at, what there is of him is good stuff, and I always forget his looks when he once gets going.

No, he is not a great Bible man either, although he has got some pieces out of the old Book that he can put into you in such a way as makes your flesh creep, or softens you down till you cry like a child.

And, then, all that he does say, when he gets into the spirit, sounds like Bible to me.

But, anyhow, there is one thing he can do, if I am any judge—and I reckon I am, at least I ought to be, or I should not be fit to be Sergeant-Major of this Corps ; and the Divisional Officer said, when he met our Soldiers three months ago, that I was one of the best Local

Officers in the Division, which our Sarah will never forget, and is always calling to mind when anybody says anything that reflects on me. I don't think the dear little woman will forget that speech of the Divisional Officer's as long as she lives—God bless her! Well, what I was saying was, that our Captain can make a proper Salvation Army meeting.

What do I mean by a proper meeting?

Well, I reckon that a good meeting should cheer the Soldiers up—and some of my comrades have a great deal to put up with, I can tell you.

There's Harry Hardtimes, poor fellow, he is not very strong, and has the rheumatics, and can only do odd jobs now and then, and he has a sick wife and five youngsters. I expect the devil gets at him pretty strong now and then, and I like to see him forget his troubles and get real happy.

Then, there is Mary Holdfast, with her drunken husband, who, our Sarah says, knocks her about awfully in his mad fits. I feel sure she don't get enough to eat, and I made Sarah fetch her into dinner the other Sunday; and my! didn't she eat ravenous. And she can only get into the Hall now and then, because Jack is always so savage if he finds her away when he comes home. But I do like to see Mary singing

with that beautiful look that comes on to her face, that she used to have afore she married that brute; but I must try and get at him somehow—I'll take our Captain round to see him. It always makes me feel good when I see her looking like that, because I think that she's thinking of the Better Land, where there'll be no pubs to make husbands worse than beasts, nor anything of that kind.

Then, there is Jim Wobbleton. He has lots of persecution, poor fellow, and not overmuch backbone to stand up against it. He has been in and out of the Corps I don't know how many times; and, in fact, he has never gone straight so long, and seemed so firm, as he has done since this Captain came on the scene; and I really believe that if our Captain could stop here for ever that Jim would never backslide again. Well, I do like to see Jim looking bright and happy, and hear him roaring out:

“So we'll stand the storm, for it won't be very long,
And we'll anchor by and by.”

And, then, although I'm Sergeant-Major of this Corps, and have a good wife as always helps me along, and a situation at twenty-five shillings a week all the year round, only as when there is something happens such as a strike—which

I'm sorry to say they're talking about now. But, if they pull it off, as two or three of them say they're going to, I've made up my mind to have a regular go at the people in every house of the town about their souls, and trust in God to find the family a bit of bread and butter till the thing is over.

I mentioned the scheme to Sarah last night, after we got in bed, and she says to me : "Steve, you're a good man, and you've got more faith than I have, and the Divisional Officer says you're the best Sergeant-Major in the Division, but you haven't got the responsibility on you for feeding these children, as I have; but," says she, "the Captain says as how the Lord will provide, so we'll trust Him, and go to sleep."

Still, as I was saying, I have my trials, and I like to forget 'em all, and have my soul set on fire, and our Captain is just the man to make such a meeting as does that for you.

Then, there is another reason why I like our Captain ; and that is, because he gets souls saved. Now, I can't tell you how it is ; perhaps it is because of the superior education I have had in The Army—for, you see, I couldn't read a letter in the Book when I was converted, and now I can read my Bible and the dear old "Cry" beautifully. Or, perhaps it is the feeling that came

from the blessed Lord straight into my heart when I was converted. Or, perhaps, it may be with thinking so much about the dreadful Judgment Day that is coming on, and what will follow after; I can't tell what it is, but howsoever it may be, I do like to see people come to the penitent-form. I never reckon it a good meeting on a Sunday night if we haven't had somebody out—anyway, unless there has been a good fight made for it; and our Captain is the boy to do it.

CHAPTER III.

VISITING.

I WANT to tell you some good news. I've got a letter from Captain Windy, and it's a real beauty. He says that the Provincial Commander has been up to his Division, and that they have had a great Congress, and all the Officers have got a mighty blessing for this winter's Campaign; and that he believes God has cleansed his soul from all desire to cut it fine on the platform, and all that sort of thing; and that he went home and burnt all his flowery sermons. He says that now the heavenly gales are blowing in his heart all the time, and that at every meeting he holds the Soldiers are being revived, and sinners are getting saved.

That letter has "set me up on a rock," and our Sarah as well, because Captain Windy was a bit of a favourite with her, and she says that she always believed that he would come out all right some day, and she's put that letter away in the same drawer where she keeps the letters

that Jack sends from America. And she says that she is going to get Captain Windy to pray for Jack, which is what she always does with anybody whom she thinks has got any extra blessing.

That news about Captain Windy has greatly cheered me, and I shall try and persuade our Captain to have him over to our Corps this Christmas-time. I was talking about it to Sarah over breakfast this morning, and she said she would like it very much; and, if he came, she would put him up with pleasure.

Now, I was glad to hear that, because she has refused to have anybody here since Captain Makebelieve stayed with us last Easter twelve-months. Sarah didn't like the Captain, although he had a fine time at the Corps. She says he ate and drank all he could lay his hands on, which she did not complain about, because she likes to see people enjoy their food. She says it does them more good. But what she did not approve of was that the Captain never did any religion in the family. He never read the Bible, nor prayed, nor said anything to the children about being Officers; and she has fairly set her heart on that.

She says that if it had not been for his uniform, you would not have known that he was

an Officer, and all his talk was about politics, and running down his brother Officers, and his Sergeant-Major; and Sarah says she never thinks any better of any Captain who speaks against his Sergeant-Major, because she says her husband always supports his Captain; and so she thinks every Captain ought to support his Sergeant-Major—leastways when there's children about.

And ever since that time, when our Captain has asked her to billet an Officer—and he's often having somebody to liven things up—she always says: "No, Captain, I respect you, and if ever you come back to this Corps when you have left it, which I hope will not be for a long time to come, you must always come here; but I don't want any more Captain Makebelieves in my house; and I won't have them, if I can help it."

But that letter of Captain Windy has fairly got the better of her, and now she thinks he might do the children a little good, so she is willing to have him billeted in our humble show.

Now, I was talking the last time about our Captain, and I must just have another word on him. I promised that I would finish up my account this time, and I want to keep my word; although, when I've done, it will, I am afraid, be like what the Captain told us the other night

was the opinion that the Queen of Sheba had of Solomon when she went over from Buluwayo to see him. She said the half of Solomon's wonders had not been told her. It will be just like that with our Captain when I've done with him.

However, there are two other things that help to make our Captain popular with us all, and one of these is, he is good at visitation. And yet it isn't that he does so much more of it than many Officers we've had; that is, he don't put in many more hours than Captain Gossipiton. I believe he did his regulation time like a clock; but then he was like a doctor: he had his regular set of calls; but he wasn't like a doctor, who got through his business as soon as he could, and was off again.

Captain Gossipiton would sit down in the kitchen with the servants, and talk for an hour until the girls were ashamed for being kept from their work so long, or he would talk to the shoemaker while he hammered the shoes, or to anybody he could find.

What did he talk about? Ah! that is the question. Anything that was uppermost. The weather, and the Corps, and the meetings, or the last murder, or anything else in the place that was being talked about at the time. The last

thing he did was having any honest, straight talk about holiness, and living for souls, and such-like.

What difference is our Captain? Well, you see, he has many advantages in visiting. First, they know as he is a busy man, and nobody expects that he can stop to hear small talk, and so they never think of offering it to him; and then, second, they know he is after their souls, and they expect that he will go for them as soon as the first words are out of his lips. This makes it easy for him to talk religion, and they all expect, if there's a chance at all, that he'll want to pray; and that makes it seem the right thing for him to get on to his knees, and to be off again as soon as he gets up.

Not but what the Captain is full of sympathy with all the troubles and anxieties of his Soldiers. That is what makes our Sarah like him so much. He never comes along here but he wants to know when she heard from Jack last, and how the boy's coming on, whether there's any signs of his getting converted, and no matter how short his prayer is, there is always something in it for Jack.

Then, there's the children. He knows their names, and all about them; and when they are ailing, with such things as the chicken pock, or

with the baby cutting his teeth, or that sort of thing, he's always got some good advice.

Why, Sarah says, "He's as good as a doctor about sickness;" and, if she was in any trouble, she would rather go to him than anybody she knows.

Then, you see, he visits the unconverted folks, as well as the Soldiers. Why, he has a list of all the people who come to our Hall, and has a run in regularly to see them, and everybody else, as far as that goes, where he can get his nose in.

There's Mrs. Peck-o'-troubles, who lives just opposite. He generally pops in there when he comes to see Sarah.

"Ah," he says, "Mrs. Peck-o'-troubles, I was making a call at the Sergeant-Major's, and so I thought I would look in and see how you are to-day. How's the guv'nor, and the children, and yourself?"

And then he is on to her soul, so kind and natural like, that she cannot take it amiss; and he will have a promise out of her, before she knows where she is, to look in at the Hall on Sunday night, if she possibly can, and for the children to come to the Band of Love that very evening.

CHAPTER IV.

A LOVER OF THE JUNIORS.

Now, there's one more thing about our Captain which I like, and I won't say any more after that, lest you should think I am partial, and have favourites, which I haven't, except it is for those who come up to my notions, which I have told you what they are, so that you can judge for yourself.

But there is one thing I do like our Captain for, and that is, he is the boy for the Juniors. Now, perhaps it is through Sarah drilling it into me at home that it's the children that makes the men and women Soldiers of a few years to come; and perhaps it is through thinking that I might have been a Captain myself, or perhaps a Divisional Officer, if there had been anybody to make me a Junior Soldier; or, perhaps it is through having seen the children of so many of my neighbours, and some of our Soldiers, grow up to be drunkards and ne'er-do-wells, for want of being taken hold of when they were young.

I don't know, but I do believe in the Juniors, and I do want to see them done well for.

Then, perhaps it is because our Junior Corps has been so shamefully neglected for some years past by some of our Officers, that has made me think so much more of what our Captain has done for it.

There was Captain Highflyer. He told me himself that he was not going to spend his precious time, and his God-given abilities, on a lot of ignorant children. He had something more important to do. His mission was to their fathers and mothers: he would get them saved, and they must look after the children.

Then, there was Captain Mary Tall-talk. Why, the first week she was here she met the Junior Locals, and addressed them for three-quarters of an hour about the importance of the children being saved, and about the way the thing should be done, and a great deal more, but she never lifted her little finger towards doing it. Bless her, she had a good deal to do, and worked very hard at it, but she did nothing for the children.

There was Captain Bigheart. He worked night and day, himself and his Lieutenant, and made quite a respectable thing of the children's meetings; but not having made a proper Junior

Staff, and taught them how to keep our work going, it nearly all fell away when Bigheart left.

Now, our Captain, you see, goes into the work like business. He has fixed himself up at some of the meetings, and he takes his appointments like a machine. He examines the Junior Soldier Locals, visits the sick children, and loves and labours for the youngsters as conscientiously as he does for the Seniors.

And he has some blessed times with them, I can tell you. Why, there was dear little Patty Paleface, who was sick for six weeks. He visited her almost every day, and talked and sung to her, and took her nice little cups of milk stuff with his own hands, that his wife made for her. And when Patty died it was like Heaven to be in the chamber, and half the place came to the funeral, and he got her drunken father and back-slidden mother both saved at the memorial service.

Yes, I like our Captain. Long may he live! I have only one regretful feeling about him, and that comes over me when I think of the day that he will be taken from our Corps. But God must have many more as good as he is in this blessed Army, for I thoroughly believe in our Officers.

CHAPTER V.

REVIVALS.

OUR Divisional Officer, Major Never-rest, was at our Corps last night, telling us all about a great Staff Council that they've been having in London, where The General—God bless him!—has been laying down the law, that everybody has to rouse himself up, and go for the drink, and the sinners, and the devil in dead earnest all through the country—I'm not sure whether he didn't say all through the world; and the Major says that this means our Corps among the rest; and he says there must be a general shaking up of ourselves, and a desperate lot of fighting with the enemy, or else we shall be left behind.

Oh, my, didn't the Major go it strong! And I quite agreed with every word he said. It made me feel just like the old days, when we couldn't rest without doing something fresh continually, and when we were mobbed in the market-place, and had every window broken in the Hall, and the Captain was locked up for a fortnight.

Don't I remember that time? I should think I do! My face was so covered with sticking-plaster, through the stones and scratchings of the roughs, that Sarah, my wife—God bless her!—could hardly find a clear spot for a kiss, and she declared that I looked more to her liking with all them patches on than ever I did before. She's a plucky little woman is our Sarah!

Yes, The General's all right. The dear old Army was made for fighting; and it's my honest opinion that it's the fighting what has made us Salvationists what we are. I don't know a single Corps that has gone down which has kept up the fighting; while I know a few, I'm sorry to say, that hasn't done much good since the fighting slackened.

And, to make a clean breast of it—which I might as well do while I'm about it—I think this very Corps of ours has settled down a good deal on the comfortable line.

Sarah says straight out that we're all *stagnated*, and that I'm stagnated myself—which is an awful thing to say about a *Sergeant-Major!* But she sticks to it.

"Why," says she, "instead of shouting the roof off, like you once did when you prayed, and worrying the life out of everybody who was not killing themselves to save souls, now you pray

quite elegantly, just like Captain Swellum used to do, and go on quietly and peaceably, whether there's anyone at the penitent-form or no."

Them are Sarah's opinions, and I am afraid she is not far wrong.

Now, I am glad that the Divisional Officer has come along, and stirred us all up; but I hardly see how we are going to do anything very powerful all in a hurry, fixed as we are.

You see, our new Officers have just come in, and they're only two lads. Why, bless me, I don't think the Captain is much older than our Jack, and how he's going to manage a Corps like Darkington, with all these steady-going Soldiers and old-fashioned Locals in it, I can't see for the life of me.

But I must say the Captain is rather a promising-looking young fellow. I reckoned him up at the first meeting, and I says to Sarah, as soon as I got home: "Sarah," says I, "the Captain's the right sort. I felt it in my bones the first time when I heard him pray; but I'm afraid he'll find Darkington a difficult job."

But before I could get any further with what I was going to say, Sarah stopped me.

"Sergeant-Major," says she—Sarah is very proud of my rank, and she always gives me my title when she addresses me, either at home or

anywhere else—"Sergeant-Major, you'll have to stand by that Captain. It's true as he is a young man, but that's not a fault, is it? Isn't it the young Officers who are so cheerful, and always willing to venture something, and who are so attractive to other young folks, and so easily led? Cannot a Sergeant-Major of your abilities do as you like with a young Officer when he wants to do the right thing, when some of them old cut-and-dried people won't listen to a Local Officer at all?

"But, you see," says she, "perhaps it's the thought about my own children who are just gone out from the Training Home—both being so young—that makes me feel as though I want to mother all the young Officers that come along; and now, mind, Sergeant-Major Do-your-best, I hope you are going to stand by this young Captain, and do by him as you hope the Sergeant-Major is going to do by your own son, Jack, who is just gone into his new Corps."

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Now, I want to tell you what has happened lately.

What with one Captain going away, and another coming in, we didn't have a Soldiers' Meeting on Tuesday, and so the Captain got one on Friday, and a remarkable meeting it was, I

can tell you. First of all, we sang the song, "Send the Fire!" and then the Lieutenant prayed. And then the Captain got up, and made a little speech.

"My dear comrades," he said. I liked the way he started off. He stood straight up like a man that knew what he was after, looked us all fairly in the face, spoke out strong, although in nice, easy words, so that everybody could understand him; and we all felt at once, that while he was of the humble sort, he was not without a will of his own. He didn't say much, but what he did say was to the point.

"Comrades," says he, "I've not been with you very long; but I've been on the ground long enough to see the Hall, a few of the Soldiers, to look through the Roll, to shake hands with the Local Officers, and to praise God for having raised up such a fighting force in this town of Darkington! Then," says he, "comrades, I've also had a stroll or two through the place; I've looked at the crowded pubs and the theatre, and I've been inside that devilish low concert hall just round the corner; and I've seen the crowds of young people all rushing, giggling, and laughing, down the broad road.

"And, then, comrades," says he, "I've compared these thousands who are for sin, and the

devil, and Hell, with the handful at our Corps who are for salvation, and God, and Heaven, and the thought has made my heart ache. Comrades," says he, "we must have a Revival; we must have something done. I'm here on purpose for it. These poor deluded slaves of sin and the devil have ears, and we must make them hear about Calvary; they have eyes, and we must show them a few Salvationists in dead earnest; they have hearts, and we must make them feel the dying love of Jesus; they have souls, and we must win them."

And then he stopped a bit, and the tears came into his eyes, and he said: "Comrades, I've made up my mind to have a crowd of these poor sinners saved, or I'll die in the attempt, and you shall bury me in your cemetery."

And when he said those last words, it all seemed so real earnest-like, that I felt all tender, and I turned to look at Sarah, and she was crying like a child; and she said to me in a whisper: "Sergeant-Major," says she, "you're going to help that young man, or I'll leave you and go and live with Jack; for I feel I must go somewhere where sinners are coming to Jesus, or I shall die as well."

Well, now, after this, the Captain, he says: "Comrades, as to what is to be done, I don't

exactly see at the minute. I've had a talk with the Sergeant-Major and with his wife"—which he had, and I'm glad he mentioned Sarah—"and I've had a word with the Treasurer; but I am going to think and pray about it, for I'm determined," he says, "to do something desperate; and I think we'll begin with a Half-Night next Tuesday, and have a meeting in the fair that they say is coming off on Wednesday. I find that I can hire a tent right in the middle of the ground, and we'll have a meeting on Sunday morning at half-past twelve opposite the 'Blue Boy'; and we'll all pray every day for the down-coming of the Holy Ghost on this town. Now," says he, "we'll read The General's Letter about the Fire."

His talk had not lasted more than ten minutes, and we were all sharpened up for what came after. But, there, you should have heard him. I wish the dear General had been there to hear that Letter read for himself. God bless him!

And when he said at the finish, "Let's all go down, and cry to God," my heart was fairly bursting ; and before that bit of prayer was over there was a shaking among the dry bones of Darkington Corps, I can tell you.

Still, there wasn't many "Amens." Some of the old stagers, especially, were a little stiff.

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The meeting wasn't a very large one either, and altogether I could see the Captain was a little disappointed. But I gave his hand a good squeeze when I said good-night; and although Sarah doesn't approve of Officers going out to supper, she asked him to go on with us, and have a bit of bread and cheese; but he refused with a kind "thank you."

As we walked home, Treasurer Always-the-same and Envoy As-you-were, who live just a little beyond our house, joined us on the road.

At first nothing was said. I must say for myself that I felt rather solemn like. The thought of the heavenly Fire coming to Darkington, of which we had just been hearing, and the talk of the Captain, had gone right into me; and, as to Sarah—well, she had hardly got her tears dry.

So we plodded on. At last the Treasurer put in a word: "What did you think of to-night's doings?" said he.

"Which part of 'em?" says I, because the Treasurer is a better scholar than I am, and I didn't want to make a mistake; besides, I felt that, being the Sergeant-Major, it was very proper that I should say the right thing, so I waited to know what part of the night's doings he meant.

"Well," says the Treasurer, "I mean the new Captain's speech."

"Well," says I, "I thought it was the very thing. Didn't you think so, Treasurer?" says I.

"Well, yes," he says, rather coldly; "I think it would be all right for some Corps, but I hardly see how that sort of thing fits us. I don't altogether approve of these spasomy kind of things. We are not in so bad a condition at Darkington, after all. We increased the Self-Denial and nearly doubled the Harvest Festival. We are out of debt; and if the Captain goes steady, he'll get full salary. The congregation is not much less than for the last three years, and the Juniors are looking up."

"But," says Sarah, putting in and dragging at my arm as I was helping her along—for she had done a hard day's work assisting Sister Break-down, who has been laid up with the influenza for three months, as well as doing her own work—"But," says Sarah, "what about the poor sinners and the backsliders which the Captain talked about, who are living wicked lives all about us, and dying every day, and going to the cemetery up our way; and what about a lot of our own half-hearted Soldiers who are nearly gone back to the world altogether, which the poor Captain knows nothing about as yet?"

"Well, yes," joined in the Envoy, who had not spoken up to now; "it is high time we had something done; but this Captain has hardly got into his Quarters as yet, and he doesn't know much about our condition or about the town."

"No," chimed in the Treasurer again; "how can he? Besides, see how young he is! Why, bless me, I'm old enough to be his father, and I was converted, let me see—he talks to-night about having been saved five years—why, I've been a Local Officer in Darkington Corps for ten years. I think I ought to know something about things. When he spoke to me about these new schemes of his, I gave him a pretty strong hint or two. But what I want to know is, who's going to find the money for this tent he talks about in the fair, and all these new measures? —that's what I want to know. No debt, is my rule. Where's the money coming from?"

"Then," said the Envoy, "this will break in upon the regular course of the meetings, and you can't have such new-fangled things without the danger of spoiling what you've got a-going already. Besides, I don't like so much excitement in religion. These Letters of The General are about as much as I can stand."

"Yes," said the Treasurer, "let's go along smoothly and steadily. That's what I'm for."

" Well," says Sarah, " why don't you join the Chapel ? Things goes on there smoothly enough, except when there's an election or some other hubbub of that sort !"

By this time we'd just got to our house, and I was mighty glad we had, for I could see Sarah was getting rather warm, and I was afraid she'd lose the blessing she'd got at the meeting. So I made the Treasurer and the Envoy come in and have a bite of supper ; and we had a little prayer, and they both seemed quite softened like.

When they were gone, Sarah says : " I wonder if the Captain's gone to bed ? "

" Not he," I said.

" Well, then," says she, " it's only a few yards to his Quarters. Just run round, and tell him that, whatever comes or goes, Sergeant-Major Do-your-best and his wife are going to stand by him in having a good fight for the souls of the people of Darkington."

CHAPTER VI.

THE RAID ON THE FAIR.

Now, after that meeting which I was telling you about in the last chapter, there was a good deal of talk in the Corps, I can tell you, and different people had different opinions, which I don't in no wise object to, as long as they keep on loving one another and doing their duty.

But some thought one way, and some thought another, about the Captain's speech and his new ways of doing things.

For instance, there's Jim Grumbleton ; he's a very decent fellow. He earns pretty good money, and I must say he's always ready with a trifle for the good cause; but he's not much of a hand in a prayer meeting, you know; and he's never at a loss at doing a bit of fault-finding. Now, Jim, he works down at our place, and I tumbled over him as I went to the factory a morning or two after the meeting.

" Well, Sergeant-Major," says he, " that new Captain of ours is a decent fellow, I fancy, and

means well; but I can't see," says he, " how a lad like him's going to mend things much. What does he know ; and what can he do? Why, bless my soul, he's not much older than I am. Now, if you could get The General or the Commissioner to come this way and have 'a big go,' and get the Mayor into the chair, and rouse the town; or if the Chief of the Staff would come to Darkington, and hold one of those wonderful meetings of his, and show us Locals how we could raise the Corps, and fill the Hall, and get the money without us having to be at any trouble, that would be something like.

" Anyhow," says he, " you won't find me among the rabble at the fair on Wednesday; I'm going to take my girl, who's not very well, down to Frampton-by-the-Sea, for a little change of air; besides," says he, " I'm not going to put myself about over the Corps for some time to come; I've tried before to mend things. There was that waxwork affair with the limelight, when Captain Swellum was here; it cost me about fifty shillings, from first to last, but nothing came of it."

" Sergeant Grumbleton," I says—Jim was made a Ward Sergeant two years ago; but I don't think he has ever paid a visit or struck a stroke since that day, and that rather reflects on

our Captains—God bless them!—not seeing that the Local Officers does their duty as well as has their titles—“Sergeant,” I says, “I am ashamed to hear you talk in that way; if we had The General here—God bless him!—which I should very much like to see, and so would our Sarah; but if he did come, he could only do the Corps any real good by stirring up us Locals and Soldiers, and getting us to repent of our coldness, and go to work praying for ourselves, and visiting and weeping over the poor sinners, and doing the Open-Airs, and all that sort of thing; and can’t we do that without The General? And we need not drag the Chief all the way from London to Darkington to tell us what we know about our duties. We all know them very well; anyhow, that’s what I think—and I ought to know, as has been the Sergeant-Major of this Corps for all these years.”

Sergeant Grumbleton didn’t like this talk; but it did him good, I fancy.

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Well, we didn’t have the tent in the fair after all, for the Captain, he says to me, the day after the meeting: “Sergeant-Major,” says he, “I think we’ll give up that tent that I talked about; I don’t want to frighten the Treasurer all at once, and when we get on a little further, he’ll be

willing to have a tent or anything else. But, you see, he don't quite understand spending a shilling to get a sovereign, so we'll go softly at first."

Well, the fair came round, and a bonnie affair it was, I can tell you. Times is good Darkington way, and money is plentiful, and the people was flush and foolish into the bargain, as they had saved up for; and they went in for a regular hot 'un, and no mistake. What crowds did come together!

I never can tell where the people come from at such times. All the rowdies of the country for miles round must have been there, and lots of real decent people, so far as looks go, into the bargain; and as soon as ever they got into the town, the first thing they did was to begin drinking, and it was drink, drink, all the time. And when the evening came on, and they were all that excited, I can tell you it made a scene bad enough to make angels weep, which Sarah says as how that they don't; for if they cry in Heaven, she says she don't want to go there, as she has had crying enough down here.

You see, I can't understand things; I was reading in the paper the other day something about the great improvement that had taken place in the state of the common people; how that the

Board Schools and Education, and Free Libraries and P.S.A.'s, and halfpenny newspapers, and every man having a vote that pays his rates, and the new century, and such like improving institutions was bringing in the millennium.

But, Oh, my ! you should have seen that fair. It was just like Hell let loose. Oh ! the drunken men ; and, Oh !—which is the worst of all—the drunken women.

As for Sarah, she fairly cried over the drunken boys and girls that were all around, and when we got home, she says, " Sergeant-Major," says she, " supposing our Jack and our Mary had been a-capering and a-bawling and a-squealing among these poor deluded creatures, instead of being Salvation Officers, what should I have said ? And, instead of your being Sergeant-Major of Darkington Corps, which I am real proud of, you had been a miserable drunkard, or in your grave, and your poor soul lost for ever, which would have been the likely case but for The Army, what a thing it would have been !"

Oh, that fair ! I've heard our Officers talk about dragging poor sinners from the brink of Hell ; well, we went that night to fetch them out of Hell itself.

But, let me tell you how we set about this business. First, we met at the Hall, at seven

o'clock. There was a nice lot of us; you see, some was there that I never expected would come out for such a job, I assure you; I think they felt ashamed like, to let the Captain go without being supported. That's what I'm always saying: "Go first, and somebody will follow." I wish I was bolder at going first myself. I must try and improve. However, there we were, and after a good time at prayer, the Captain said a few words.

"Comrades," says he, "we're going on a rather difficult undertaking to-night. I've been through the fair already, and I find the devil is there in strong force. You men had better button up your coats, put the sisters in the middle of the march, and cast yourselves on God for guidance, and courage, and patience, and love. Keep as calm as you can; look well about you; hold together; don't get separated. Sing with all your might. Let those who speak, shout it out. Keep believing, and God will give us the victory."

And then away we went. But just as we were coming to the outskirts of the fair ground, and the mixed noise of the music, and shouting, and hooters, and drumming, was being pretty plainly heard in a little pause of the singing, who should we meet but Deacon Propriety!

Now, the Deacon is a great man, and a good man, too, at the fine church as has a steeple just above the Hall. He stopped as he came along, and made straight for the Captain, and began lecturing him, so that we could all hear him quite plain.

"What mad thing are you after to-night?" says he.

"We're going to the fair," the Captain said, quite calmly.

"What!" says the Deacon. "Are you going amongst that drunken, devilish mob, and taking these young people with you, too"—looking at some of the Corps Cadets, who just looked like angels, flushed as they were with a little excitement—"to hear all that horrid language, and see all the fighting and things that are going on? Besides, is not the whole thing a dragging of our holy religion in the mire, and degrading it in the sight of the world? What can justify such a spectacle? How can you expect the blessing of God on it?"

Now, the Captain was just waiting for him to finish, and getting a nice and proper answer ready, when Sarah, who stood by, was unable to hold herself quiet any longer, and she burst in:—

"Deacon Propriety," says she (she did not forget to give him his title, you see, although

her blood was up to boiling-point), "Deacon," says she, "if your boy or your girl was in a burning building, and the flames was all around them, and they were just going to perish, would you not be thankful if anybody went in to try and save them, even if there was a cursing, vulgar lot of people all about, and even if they might get their faces blackened, and their clothes spoiled, and run a little danger of getting themselves burnt into the bargain? Deacon," says she, and her eyes flashed again, and she clenched her little fists, "somebody's boys and girls are in that fire of debauchery, and drink, and hell, and if God will help me, I'm going to get one of 'em out to-night; and if God don't help me, I'm going to do the best I can by myself."

That was a very foolish speech of Sarah's, was it not? A very foolish speech! But I don't know that I ever felt so proud of the little woman before, and it was rather excusable, wasn't it? as she was excited by the cold-bloodedness of the Deacon, who reckons that he is the principal shining light of what he calls the most intellectual church in Darkington, and which, he says, is descended from Oliver Cromwell himself.

I can't describe what followed, except that we marched right into the middle of the jolliest row I ever was in in all my life; and in my

wicked days, I was in some scrimmages at the Derby races, and in the East End, and such like places, I can tell you.

But this was a reg'lar record-breaker. Didn't we get rolled about, and no mistake ; but we sang, and we preached, and we prayed ; and they offered us gallons of drink, and when we would not have it, they threw it over us.

Didn't they mess up my new uniform, as Sarah had been a-saving up for for three months gone by ; but, bless her ! she took it quite good-natured, and cleaned it up the next day with some paraffin stuff, that you could smell the Sergeant-Major across the Hall for a fortnight after.

However, everybody was good-natured ; and even the publicans said that we were the only religious folks in the town who practised what we preached ; and, best of all, we got one poor prodigal down at the drum, and marched him away with us ; and he's turned up at the meeting since, and I believe that he's properly saved—I do indeed.

CHAPTER VII.

LOOKING AFTER NEW CONVERTS.

Now, I was telling you in the last chapter about the visit our Corps made to the fair, and what a downright good "go" it was. It just suited my taste, and made me feel quite young again, I can tell you!

The poor drunkard we captured has turned out a capital case. I thought he would. Sergeant Look-'em-up took him home with him the same night, gave him a dose of strong tea, some good advice, had a good pray with him, and then saw him to his own place.

That was good, and, Oh, my word, wasn't his wife glad to hear the news! The poor little woman has been half starved, and the children—well, there's better times before them all, now, I hope.

But what do you think? This man turns out to be a sort of foreman in Deacon Propriety's mill, and one of the best workmen he has. The Deacon has had a lot of patience with him, and

threatened to discharge him ever so many times on account of his drunken goings on. He says he has borne with him on account of his wife and children; but I suspect that his being such a clever fellow with the machinery, and such a good hand with the men, has had something to do with it.

Anyhow, the Deacon called on the Captain the next morning, to say how glad he was to hear the news about Will Boozham—for that is his name—and that he is sorry he said anything against our going into the fair; and that Sarah's speech had troubled him all night; and as how as Boozham's case had quite altered his opinions about The Army; that he didn't understand us before.

And, then, he asked the Captain to pray for a son he has somewhere in Australia, who, he says, is a bit unsteady, and left a sovereign to pay for repairing the drum that he had heard was broken in the scrimmage; and then he told the Captain that when he was hard up he was to give him a call.

Now, that *did* please Sarah when the Captain told us all about it at night.

"Sergeant-Major," says she, when we got home, "isn't that just what I've always been telling you—that the way to make friends and

get money for the Corps is to go and get the poor lost creatures saved? While you all sit on your comfortable seats in the Hall, or stand in the Open-Air ring, at the very same spot you've been at since the days of Adam, and beg and beg from the same little set of people you've been squeezing all that time, you'll want money; and serve you right! But, if you will go into the devil's compounds, and fetch out the poor wretches that are dying and going to Hell with their drink, and their pride, and their blasphemies, then you'll get all the money you need, and the blessing of God into the bargain."

Now, I think this was rather rough of Sarah, because at Darkington No. I Corps we have three different stands; but I suppose there are thirty more which we might have if we went to look for them. So I didn't say anything to contradict her.

A few days after all this I fell in with Jim Grumbleton again. "Well," says I, "Sergeant, how did you get on at Frampton?"

"How did I get on?" says he. "Well, very poorly. I didn't enjoy myself one morsel. You see, Jennie went and took ill as soon as we got there; and the woman where we had lodgings was as crooked as she could hang together, and I was like 'a fish out of water'

among the giggling crowd, and felt awful cowardly, to think that I hadn't got my uniform on, and wasn't going for them about their souls, for all I was worth. Then, I remembered the fair, and wished I had been with you. So I was real glad to get home again."

Then, I set on to tell him what a blessed time we had; and how I hoped we had got Will Boozham really saved; and I was going on with quite a little sermon, when Jim interrupted me, and, says he:—

"Now, Sergeant-Major, you are a good fellow, and I like you very much; but, you know, I have no hope for Boozham—no, not that!"—and he snapped his fingers, and as he walked along he kicked a stone off the path—nearly through a shop-window close by. "No," said he, "he's not worth your trouble; and, if you have no more to show for your night's work, and your smashed drum, and the mess I hear they made of your new uniform, than Will Boozham, the game wasn't worth the candle."

"Sergeant," says I, "what do you mean?"

"Mean!" says he. "I mean that I don't believe that there's any hope for Will. Hasn't he signed teetotal, I don't know how many times?—and wasn't he a Soldier in our Corps for ever so long?—and wasn't he a Local?—

and didn't they think he'd make an Officer?—and then didn't he go and tip it all over, and disgrace us all before the town? No, I'm done with Boozham; I've clean given him up."

"What!" I says, "you, a Soldier in The Salvation Army, really cannot mean to say that, because a man has fallen, and got up, and then gone and fallen again, that he's to be left to perish—that we are to see him going down to destruction, and getting nearer and nearer the pit every day, and we aren't to make an effort to save him? Is that like Jesus Christ? Didn't He say we were to seek the lost sheep in the wilderness, and to forgive him seventy times, and more?"

But here we had got to the gate, and Jim bade me good-bye, with a queer look on his face, which seemed to say: "What a Simple Simon you are to believe in saving such fellows as Boozham!"

Now, I must say, I felt quite bad after this talk, seeing that I had got quite interested in poor Will; and I should have felt a good deal worse, but, just as I walked across the yard, who should I meet but Joe Look-'em-up, our Recruiting-Sergeant. So I made for him at once, thinking that he would be sure to know how Boozham was shaping.

"Sergeant," says I in a sort of whisper—for there were a lot of people about—"have you heard anything about Boozham?" I tell you, I was afraid of my life what his answer would be.

But Joe blurted out "Amen!"—loud enough to be heard all round about; and, says he, "Oh! he's all right. I've seen him every day since the fair night; and I'm going to hold on to him like grim death. I've made up my mind that the devil and the publicans shan't have him again, if I can help it!"

So I thanked God and took courage, and resolved that I would look up Boozham myself, for I felt rather condemned that I hadn't given him a call.

Still, although I was comforted, I couldn't help telling Sarah at dinner-time about Grumbleton's unbelief. You should have seen her! Instead of being put out, as I expected, she smiled one of her pitiful smiles—which, I suppose, was intended for me.

"Sergeant-Major," says she, "I thought you had more sense and more religion than to take notice of every poor unbelieving soul that you meet. Why, Grumbleton's half a back-slidder himself! He thinks more of jaunting about with that unconverted girl of his, and going after his own pleasure, although he is a

Sergeant in our Corps, than all the poor drunkards and their broken-hearted wives in the town of Darkington; and, now that poor Boozham's got on to his feet once more, he not only refuses to do anything to keep him up, but goes about discouraging everybody else that does. Because Boozham's been a Soldier and gone down, he says we are not to help him up, supposing that he might go down again! That's it, isn't it, Sergeant-Major?"

And I said, "Yes, that's it."

"Well," Sarah went on, "if them are his sentiments, Sergeant-Major, is that any reason why we should refuse to pick him up? Is that the way we treat one another in the general goings-on of our lives? When anybody goes over in the street, do we refuse to help them on to their feet for fear they should fall again?

"Sergeant-Major, I want to ask you a question, which you, as a Local Officer, ought to be able to answer me, who is only a plain woman."

"All right," says I, "go on."

"Well, if your neighbour, Jim Brown, as is bad with what the doctors says is 'appyplexy'—which, I think, has come with having a great deal too much to eat, and a little too much to drink—well, if poor Brown as has a wife and six little children, falls down in a fit on the road

yonder, over which those horses, and busses, and carts is rattling at such a rate, should we refuse to pick him up, and try and get him put straight for fear he should have another fit, and fall again in some other part of the town, and be killed after all? No, Sergeant-Major, you know we should not. You know that we should rush in, and hold up our hands, and turn the traffic on one side, while we dragged him away from the wheels and the horses' feet, and take him home, or to the hospital.

"Now, here is poor Boozham, and his half-starved wife. I knew her when she was quite a girl, and she was one of the best-tempered and happiest creatures in our Sunday-school. Well, here she and her husband have fallen under the hoofs of these publicans, who don't care whose happiness and brains and lives they trample out, if they can get anything out of them. Shall we refuse to try and drag the poor wretches out of their clutches, for fear they should fall again? No, Sergeant-Major—that is a doctrine of devils!

"But, then, how do we know that Boozham will fall again? There's your boy Jack, Sergeant-Major, who's just gone to his first Corps, and who, you know, you're right down proud of. Well, now, when Jack was a little fellow he had the 'diphtheria' in his throat, and the doctor said there

was just a chance of his getting well, although it would take a deal of trouble and sitting up of nights to pull him through; and that, if he did come round, he would always be having attacks of the same complaint.

" Well, you know that we did pull Jack through—although it was no thanks to you, Sergeant-Major, for you know it was before your eyes were opened by the blessed Army, and you pretended to be so distressed about him, being as he was your favourite boy, and that you comforted yourself with being drunk all the time.

" However, we pulled Jack through, and he has never had a bout of 'diftheria' since, and he can shout louder and longer nor his father, and he takes a deal of beating.

" Well, now, here's poor Will Boozham—if anybody that knows him says as he's going to fall again, I am not going to believe 'em, for one. I made up my mind that I wouldn't let Jack die of the 'diftheria,' and watched him afterwards like a cat does a mouse, poor as I was; and we're all going to watch over Will Boozham, ain't we, Sergeant-Major? and keep him from falling, if we can; and if he does fall, which God forbid, we'll pick him up again. So there's your dinner, old man. God bless you! I've got a letter from Jack. But I'll keep it till night."

CHAPTER VIII.

SARAH TALKS STRAIGHT ABOUT THE CHILDREN.

Now, there's one thing that I do think our Sarah is a trifle too anxious about, and that is over making the children into Officers.

I am a Salvationist myself, and my salvation is of the "Blood-and-Fire" sort, or else I should not do for the Sergeant-Major of the first Corps of the important town of Darkington. Still, you can carry even important things a little too far, for Sarah, you see, will not be content with the children being saved and getting to Heaven; she wants them all to be Officers, and that is rather a high target to aim at.

She says to me: "Why not, Sergeant-Major? Can anybody tell me why they shouldn't be? They are all healthy and strong, and have got the perfect use of their faculties. Is there anything half so important they can do in the world? They belong to Jesus Christ; I have heard you say so yourself, and The General says Officers of the right sort are the great need of The Army;

and why should not my childern be the right sort? and why shouldn't they go to help the dear Lord? And they shall, if I can rule; and I am going to rule, if I can!" And then she gets excited about it, and really does harass me not a little on the subject every now and then.

You see, the first three came into the world in a bit of a hurry, and grew up to be pretty big children, and did mostly as they liked—worse luck!—before their father and mother were converted; and Tom, the eldest, when he was about fourteen, went off to America with a neighbour, who took a great fancy to him, and promised to look after him, and nothing else would satisfy the boy; and though his mother was dead set against it, he teased me until I consented; and off he went; and then Sarah so abused me about it that I repented, and had a week's drinking over it, which ended, strange to say, in my getting beautifully saved.

Bless the Lord for that! My Heavenly Father knows how to bring good out of evil. But then his mother has never stopped fretting about Tom going away. She often cries herself to sleep at nights, thinking about his poor soul, and telling God that He must save him.

And then, unfortunately, instead of getting good news about the boy, it comes worse and

worse. He does not write very often himself now, and he never answers my questions about Salvation, nor replies to his mother's broken-hearted letters. But the neighbour who took him out has fallen in with The Salvation Army over there, and got saved—bless the Lord!—and he sends us news every now and then about Tom.

But I am sorry to say that it is only bad news—not about his work, for he has got a good job, and has a chance of making a lot of money, they say. You see, he is a clever young fellow—I think sometimes the cleverest of our flock—and that helps to make his mother more vexed about him. For, she says: “Only think what a thing it would be if the devil was to get the cleverest in the family to spend his life in making a fortune and go to Hell at last, when he might be winning souls, and end up in Heaven! No,” she says, “The Army ought to have him for Jesus Christ, and it shall do, if I can shape it!”

But, I was saying, it seems as how as Tom has got into bad company, does a little betting, and takes nips of brandy, and cocktails, and such things. Now, I don't know what cocktails are, except it is that they stir the spirits they drink with feathers of some sort. Anyway, from the latest accounts, poor Tom is going down the broad road, and that at a pretty round pace.

Now, when I had read the last letter over to Sarah, and she was crying over it fit to break her heart, I felt I must say something to comfort her, and so I says: "Sarah, ought we to be surprised at this? Isn't it all through my example? What did he see in his father—and, as far as that goes, in his mother, as well—to lead to anything different?"—for we both lived very far away from God. "What else could we expect?"

And you should have seen her!—all at once she wiped her tears away with her apron. She always has a nice clean apron on, no matter what work she is doing. Well, she wiped her tears away, and her eyes flashed fire, and she turned on me furious-like, and she says:—

"What can I expect, Sergeant-Major? Why, I'll tell you what I expect—I expect that God is going to convert the boy. That is what I expect. Nothing else will do for his mother, whether it does for his father or not.

"Haven't I repented for him, and cried myself to sleep nights without number, and prayed for his salvation every day since God converted my poor soul?—and does not our Captain say that if we believe with all our hearts God will give us the things for which we ask?—and if that comes true of strangers in the Hall, won't it come true

of our own flesh and blood? Yes, I believe that God is going to convert Tom, and make an Officer of him. Of course I do. I can't be happy in England now, with Tom serving the devil in America; and how could I be happy in Heaven with my poor Tom in Hell, especially when I should be thinking all the time that it was through his mother's example before she was converted, and her neglect of his soul after she was saved?

"No; I tell you, Sergeant-Major, that it is all very well for fathers to be faint-hearted about the salvation of their children, but a mother what feels her responsibility is different. She will be resolved to have her children saved, whether they will or no; and I am going to have Tom saved if I have to go to America on purpose. I am a very bad sailor, and never expected to come on shore alive when I went on the sea in that sailing-boat that was like a big washing-tub, with a sheet hung on a clothes'-prop and stuck in the middle of it. It was when I went with the Corps on that excursion to Whitepool; it was the only time I ever was on the water in my life, and I vowed a solemn vow that day that if the Lord would let me get safe to land once more, so as I might see your face and the children before I died, that I would never fly in the face of Providence again by going off dry land!"

" But Tom's soul must be saved, and if it is necessary, and the Lord will excuse me breaking my promise, I'll face the dangers of the stormy seas once more to get him converted and made into an Officer; for I believe that is what he was born for; and I don't mean Providence to be bested by the devil if I can help it ! "

Now, I have had many talks with Sarah since that day, and tried hard to comfort her, for she is, like Hannah, a woman of a sorrowful spirit, and it's all about Tom, and the news we get doesn't grow any better.

" Sarah," says I to her one of these nights, after I had come in from the Outpost, where we got a big drunkard saved, and I was in good spirits : " Sarah," says I, " you must not distress yourself like this; you must have faith in God, and hope for the best."

" Yes, Sergeant-Major," she says, " it's all very well for fathers to comfort themselves, and take it easy, and hope for the best, as you say; but they have not eyes to see what is coming on the souls of their children like mothers have, if you don't do all you can to keep it off." And I knew what she meant. It was a hint that I ought to go to America to try and get Tom saved, which she had been on about once or twice before.

Then I says to her: "Sarah, is not this ingratitude for all the goodness of God to you? and isn't it like flying in the face of your Heavenly Father, and being ungrateful in forgetting all His wonderful goodness to your other children? Have you not got three of them saved, and aren't they the best children in the world, and don't they love their mother? and is not Jack a Captain just gone to his first Corps? and is not Sarah a Lieutenant? and is not Mary a Corps Cadet? and are you not full of hope that Benjamin, the baby, is going to grow up to be a child of the living God and be an Officer?"

Now, I meant all this for the best, and I thought that what I brought in about the baby becoming an Officer would have pleased her; and it seemed to me that it was nearly as nice a little speech as the Captain could have made. But you should have seen the look she gave me!

"Sergeant-Major," she said, "do you know what you are talking about? I don't think you do. Is that the proper talk for the man that holds your office? Do you think your baby"—(she always calls it my baby when she talks to me serious about it)—"Sergeant-Major," she says, "do you think that your baby is a child of the devil, and that he has to grow up before he can get into the arms of his Saviour? No,

you don't; and if you do, I don't! I believe what our Captain says, that the promise of salvation is to us and to our children, and that I have received salvation not only for myself but for Benjamin; and I believe that if he is taken away while he is a baby he will be taken to Christ's bosom; and if he lives and I nurse him for God, which I am going to do, he will grow up to be an Officer. That's what I believe; and didn't you kneel down beside me, before the child had been in the world many hours, and did we not give him to God, together, to be an Officer?

"Did you believe God took him, or didn't you? That's what I want to know. Well, whether his father believed or not, his mother did ; and when the Captain came in the first time, and called him the 'Little Corporal,' I said to myself : 'Yes, Captain, that's it; he has started early with his promotion, and his mother will hold him up to it until he is an Officer.' "

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Hallelujah! Here is a letter just in from Tom. He has been caught by The Army, and got gloriously saved, and tells his mother that, if he can make himself worthy of it, he means to throw up every other chance in life for the best of all—to be an Officer! So Sarah has got her own way after all.

CHAPTER IX.

THE HOLINESS MEETING.

EVER so many things have happened at Darkington Corps since the last chapter, and, bless the Lord! the best of all is that the good work of soul-saving that was begun on that fair night has kept going on ever since.

It is true, we only get our captures, as the Captain very properly calls them, by one here and one there ; but I cannot help thinking that this may, after all, be one of God's intended plans, although Sergeant Splashem was complaining about it the other night as we walked home.

"Sergeant-Major," says he, "why don't we have great sweeps of conversions like what we read of in the Apostles' days—such as The General gets in those great demonstrations they tell us about week after week in 'The War Cry'? Why don't we have wonderful things like them done at Darkington? That is what I want to know."

" Well, Sergeant," says I, " that is a difficult question you put to me; but the way I look at the subject is like this. You see, when The General goes along, there is a great fight, and half the Officers of a Division go up to help him; and it would be a pity if something extraordinary didn't happen at any place with such a lot of hands on the job.

" It was like that at Jerusalem, I suppose, on the day of Pentecost. All the Officers in the country were at work that day, and they were all full of the Holy Spirit into the bargain, and they rushed all over the place like mad people, preaching and praying, and inviting people to be saved. If we could only get as many Officers, and Locals, and Soldiers at Darkington all as red-hot as those men and women were on that wonderful day, something out of the common would happen here, I can tell you.

" But, then," says I, " look here, Sergeant. Don't you think that this slow way of doing things, as you find fault with, may, after all, be as much God's plan as the great sweeps that you admire so much? In the dreadful droughts that come on the country every now and then, when everything is parched up, and nobody can hardly get a drop of water to drink, and the cattle are all dying of thirst, we are glad of a good

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downpour, even if it does make a flood, and wash away some of the bridges, and drown a lot of sheep, and do a heap of damage of various kinds.

"But ain't we very thankful also for the rain that comes in a quiet way all the year round? For my part, I like the constant shower; and the heavenly rain that comes down a little here and a little there may, after all, answer its purpose best. What I have to say is, let us be thankful for souls, whether we get them in large numbers or just by ones and twos, and let us mind and be careful how we look after them when we do get them."

Now, nothing, for a long time, has made a greater stir in our Corps than what happened at one of our Holiness Meetings. You see, we had got into such an unbelieving way about it that nobody ever expected anything particular to come out of this kind of meeting, and it was done unto us according to our unbelief. I am ashamed to say that I never expected anything myself; and as to Sarah, why, she gave up going altogether; and when I said to her that she ought to make a try to be there sometimes, she up and says to me:—

"No, Sergeant-Major, Saturday is a very hard day for me. There's the extra clearing-up

and the cooking of something a bit nice ready for Sunday—and there's mending the children's clothes—and there's getting them scrubbed a bit extra—and ever so many other things that men can't be expected to know anything about, so that I'm pretty well played out when night comes round. Then, you see, I'm getting older, as you know, and I'm so tired on Sunday morning that except there is something at the Hall to go for, why, then, I feel I can rest myself a little extra. Besides, it gives me a good chance of writing a bit of a letter to one of the children."

"But," says I, "Sarah, don't you think that, being, as you are, the wife of the Sergeant-Major of the Corps, you ought to attend such an important service as the Holiness Meeting?"

"Well," says she, "I don't count your Holiness Meeting so very important, after all. It don't seem to me to be much better than a Free and Easy, and not so good as some of them that I have seen; indeed, I can't see any difference. If I was the Captain—which I never could have expected to be, but which, thank God, Jack is, and my Polly will be—I would not call such a meeting a Holiness Meeting at all."

Now, that was rather uncharitable of Sarah, wasn't it? And I told her so. But she said: "Sergeant-Major, don't you know that they say

that you ought to ‘call a spade a spade’? and if it is not a Holiness Meeting, why call it one?” And I must say that perhaps Sarah is right; for, after all, I don’t see much of a holiness character about our Sunday morning service myself.

Indeed, to tell the truth, the Holiness Meeting at Darkington Corps had got down about as low as it very well could; and one of the first things our Captain made up his mind to, was to raise it; and this is how he set about the work.

He announced that on the next Sunday, instead of the regular Holiness Meeting, he was going to have a Confessional Meeting.

And he made it out that it was going to be a most important affair.

Now this announcement made quite a little stir, and a great deal of talk. Some of our people said the Captain was going to bring in the Roman Catholics; and some said one thing, and some another. But all said: “We must go and see what happens!”

Well, all that week the Captain went round making the Soldiers promise to attend, and pray hard that God might come on us all, and make the gathering a mighty time; and he was so earnest about it that nobody could very well refuse him.

He got round Sarah and her difficulties very

easily. I think he gave her a hint as to what he was after; for, after a little talk, she says: "Well, Captain, though I do get dreadfully tired by Saturday night—and since these east winds have begun to blow I do begin to have twinges of my old enemy, the rheumatics—still, if you are really going to try and do something fresh, I'll be there, and my little lot will all be there as well."

So, when Sunday morning came, we had quite a good company—at least three times as many as usual. Of course, we were mostly Soldiers; but still, there was a sprinkling of our old friends the ex-Soldiers, and those regular attendants whom you can't make anything of, but who seem to come because they can't stay away.

The Captain, God bless him! began the meeting in a serious sort of a manner with the song,

"Come, Saviour Jesus, from above!"

"Comrades," he says, as he gave it out, "let us sing this song for ourselves, and think about it while we sing. And after that," says he, "anybody can pray; but do with your prayer what I advised you to do with your song; that is, think about what you are saying." And then, after the prayer, he gave us a little talk.

"Comrades," says he, "you've had a good many professing meetings on the blessed Sunday mornings that are gone. You've professed to be on 'the Lord's side'; you have said out plain that you were converted; you've professed that you loved the dear Saviour, and that you were going to live and die in His service—all of which I know is the honest truth, and I am glad that you know it too. You would be of no use to either God or man in this fight if you didn't."

"You've talked about the wonderful things you've done for Jesus Christ, and for the souls of your neighbours; and I'm proud of it. I have seen some of you fight. I shall never forget that fair night, when we took Comrade Boozham prisoner—whom I am happy to see here with a smiling face this morning. But now," says he, "I want us all—myself among the number—to look at *some of the things we haven't done, which we ought to have done; and at some of the things we have done that we ought not to have done.* We have had a lot of '*Professional' Meetings*—now we'll have a '*Confessional' Meeting*'.

"Now," says he, "let us be thoughtful and honest; and, being, as I am, the Captain, it's my turn first;" and then he went on, and made such a speech as went right through my heart.

"Comrades and friends," says he, "the Lord

has been dealing with me these last few weeks in a very pointed and faithful manner, and has shown me how far I have come short of doing His blessed will. I have confessed it all to Him, and He has heard and had compassion on me; and now I feel that I ought to confess before you, my people."

And then he went on to tell us how he had not lived as a Salvation Army Officer ought to live in his Corps, in his family, and before the world; and then he told us what agony he had suffered, because he was afraid he had not done all his duty in warning the people, outdoors and in, of their dreadful danger. And then he said he was afraid that he had been content with the smiles of the people, and with good meetings, and hadn't prayed and wrestled and toiled until he had won the souls of the people he ought to have done. And then he said:—

"Friends, I have wept over it all, as I've told you, at my Saviour's feet, and again given myself over to live and die for my Lord; and He has forgiven the past, and cleansed my heart, and baptised me with the Holy Ghost for the sanctification of Darkington Soldiers and the salvation of Darkington sinners."

He said a lot more that I can't remember; and then he sat down, and everybody was as

solemn and as still as the grave. A feeling like the Judgment Day seemed to come over us all. Nobody knew what to do next; and I don't know what we should have done; but just then the Captain started off the song :

“I need Thee, Oh! I need Thee;
Every hour I need Thee.
Oh! bless me now, my Saviour,
I come to Thee.”

While we were singing that song, I could not help looking at Sarah, and she answered with a look that went into my very soul. I knew what she meant; it seemed to say : “Sergeant-Major, aren't you going to follow that blessed Captain? Haven't *you* got something to confess?” Her eyes were full of tears, and I could see her heart was broken, and that she was ready to pour it out.

But I could not move. The Captain's words had gone right down into my heart. What he had said about the blood of souls being found on the skirt of the unfaithful watchman, was as much as I could bear. It seemed to nail me to the bench on which I sat, and before I could struggle up to tell out my own unfaithfulness, the Treasurer was on his feet.

Now, Treasurer Hold-it-tight is a good man. Every one who knows him believes in him: and

for honesty, truth, and straightforwardness, I can tell you he is hard to beat. His master reckons him as being the most trustworthy man on the works ; and we are all proud of him, and no mistake. It is true that we have counted him a little hard or cold sometimes ; but there was nothing cold or hard about him this morning—not a bit of it ! He could hardly speak on account of his feelings ; and he was ever so long before he made a start.

"Comrades," says he, "the words of our dear Captain this morning have knocked me all to pieces. If that good man has need to stand up and confess his shortcomings before us, what about me, how much more ought I to acknowledge what God has done for me, and confess how little I have done for Him ? Indeed, I am asking the question, Have I done anything at all ?

"I have looked after the money, and been proud of the Hall, and kept the books, and slaved for Self-Denial, and cared for the Officers' support, and a thousand other things ; but where have been my prayers and tears and toils for the salvation of souls ? Oh, my God ! my God ! How shall I meet the people again who have gone to the left hand of the Judgment Throne from this very town and Hall of Darkington ! "

Here our dear Treasurer fairly broke down.

After him, I stammered out something of my feelings; and, among the rest, Sarah spoke and wept like a child; and then we finished up with a great cry and a new consecration all together on our knees.

There was not much said about holiness that morning, but there has been a great deal done since. Anyhow, of one thing I am quite sure, and that is, that Sergeant-Major Do-your-best has never seen such Holiness Meetings at Dorkington I Corps as those that have followed that wonderful Confessional morning.

CHAPTER X.

THE LOCAL OFFICERS' MEETING.

THINGS keep moving on at our Corps. We have always got something fresh turning up now.

You see, our Captain is quite different to Captain Do-it-all, God bless him, what used to give us such exalted discourses about things we did not understand or very much care about either. But then they were very clever, and, though none of us were any the better for them that I know of, they brought us good congregations and collections ; and then, you see, he used to make some real beautiful prayers.

Why, bless you, he did almost all the work of the Corps himself, and a lot of us had little to do but sit by and look on. And when he went away, and another Captain came, all the people who used to come to hear Captain Do-it-all went away too, and we felt quite lost, because, you see, we not only lost the Captain, but the congregation as well.

Now, Captain Faithful is quite different to this. He is everlastingly starting some scheme or other that brings somebody fresh to the front, and so he has us all up and doing by turns.

His last move is to stir up the Locals. We knew he was going to do something in this line, because he came along and had a long talk with both me and Sarah. He always likes to rope Sarah in, and have her opinion on things, specially when he has a fresh game on the board. He has a great opinion of Sarah, and so have I, bless her !

"The Locals," says the Captain, "are not very active in Darkington. Are they, Mrs. Do-your-best ? "

"Active!" says Sarah. "No, I should think not. They are a heap better than they was, but they are a long way short of what they should be. The fact of the matter is, most of them are real lazy, and I am afraid they are too well off ever to be anything else."

"Don't say that, Sarah," says I. "How is it with you and me? Things are better with us, so far as this world goes, than they used to be. Aren't they?"

"Well," says Sarah, "I suppose they are; but since you got your last promotion in the yard, and the rise of wages that went with it, Sergeant-Major, I don't think *you* have as much *go* in you

as you used to have, and I don't know where you would have been if you had not had a wife that stirred you up every now and then, and a Captain that did not let you settle down at ease in Zion."

And then she went on: "Why, there's Sergeant Do-little. Look at him. When he was first converted he went at the sinners like a house on fire. But then," says she, "at that time he had not a friend in the world, nor hardly a shirt to his back. But since he got a regular situation, and married a Salvationist, and got a house with mahogany chairs and looking-glasses, and I don't know what else, he is 'neither hot nor cold,' and you know what that is.

"Then, there's Sergeant Take-it-easy. For two years after he was picked out of the gutter, with his poor broken-hearted wife, and five nearly naked children, my word, didn't he pray and fish. We never missed him from the Open-Air, and he was always first in the Hall on a Sunday morning, and last out at night. But he's cooled down now. I don't think he's been at the Knee-Drill for six months, nor the Open-Air for longer. It's all come about because he's got made an overlooker.

"There's a lot more of them, Captain, and it's my opinion that when the devil wants to quiet down the zeal of a Darkington Local, he gets him a better job, or puts him up in the one he has."

"Now," says I, "Sarah, you're a good kind woman, which nobody knows better than your husband, who has been married to you for thirty years and more; but I do think that these remarks are a little uncharitable to be made to our Captain."

But here the Captain put in, and says he: "Oh, all right, Sergeant-Major, let her alone. I am afraid that what she says is only too true. How can we mend matters? that's what I am after. The first thing we can do is to have a little prayer about it." And down he went straightaway, and made us both pray two minutes each; then he had a turn; and before we knew where he was, he was gone.

That night he quietly got a message round that he was going to have a Local Officers' Meeting, and that every Local must be present. Now, seeing that no Captain had ever held such a meeting before in our Corps, we were all no little curious to know what it was going to be like. However, it came off, and everybody was there, with the exception of Jim Grumbleton, whose young wife, we heard just as the time came round, had been dangerously ill, and had sent for Sarah, who said, as she went off to see her, that she hoped that the sickness would be to the saving of her soul. I was sorry Jim was not there, because

he has been so much more in earnest since that
“Your-own-flesh-and-blood Meeting.”

Well, the Captain started the meeting off with a short earnest prayer. Bless him, I do like to hear him pray. He always makes me want to be a better man.

Then he went on to say that he was glad of the opportunity for a little friendly talk on the affairs of the Corps, saying that he intended, when possible, to meet us every week, and let us know how things were going on.

Says he: “I want to have your hearts with me, and then I shall have everything else you have. You know,” says he, “that I am sent here by The General, who holds me responsible for the welfare of this Corps. It is my affair. I must make it a success, and have sinners saved, and Soldiers on fire, or it will break my heart. I have made up my mind to it. It has to be done, and done it shall be, if I can manage it.

“But,” says he, “the prosperity of this Corps is your concern also. A Salvation Army Corps is a real co-operative society, or it ought to be. We are all in the same boat; indeed,” says he, “this is more your affair than mine; so I want us all to pull together; and if we do, we shall come out somewhere near the landing stage.

“Now,” he said, “there are two things that

are a great trouble to me just now, and that both night and day. My wife is here, and she can bear witness what a burden they are. I want to take you into my confidence, and when I do I feel quite sure that you will sympathise with me.

"*And first,*" he says, "*on making up the quarter's balance-sheet, and getting in all the accounts, I find we are £17 in debt.* It seems as though the collections were very good while Captain Do-it-all was here; but the cartridges and the offerings on week-nights and in the Open-Air have gone sadly down since he left; and then there were the repairs for the roof that had been neglected for a year or two, which cost a good sum, and some other extras.

"Well, now, I had hoped that with some improvements in our income we should get round the corner; but the debt is there, and I feel it is a disgrace to the Corps; and, being just after Self-Denial, I don't like to go to the public with it. What can we do? Tell me what you think.

"*Then,*" says he, "*there is another matter that I am distressed about a long way more than the debt, and that is the state of things in the Open-Air.* And you will say, well I may be, when I point out to you two or three things about it which you must know as well as I do, but have not duly considered.

" 1. With nearly two hundred and fifty Soldiers on the Roll, there are often not more than twenty, besides the Band, in the Market Place on a Sunday morning.

" 2. Then, of those who are there, a good many do little more than gossip and look about them, and do not seem to care much about what goes on except to listen to the music, and to look after the collection.

" 3. Then there seems to be no one, besides myself and one or two more, that tries to speak so as to get anybody saved.

" 4. Then, although it is just what might have been expected, it is painful to find that very few people seem to take any notice of us. They won't even be at the trouble to come across the street to hear us talk, or sing, or pray, or anything else.

" 5. Then, what seems to me to be the worst of all, although we have stood in that spot alone for the last five years gone by, no one seems agreeable to make any change in the stand, or to go anywhere else as well.

" Now all this is a real trouble to me. I am ashamed to see the turn-out. It is a disgrace to The Army in Darkington. We have sixty Local Officers, and not more than five are present at any single Open-Air Meeting on a Sunday, and sometimes not that. People talk to me of the

beautiful Open-Airs of the past. Anyway, I am ashamed of them to-day. It is enough to break a heart of stone. I am willing to go on till I drop in the street, but I cannot alter things all myself. What shall we do? I want you to advise me."

And then he sat down, looking hard at me, as much as to say: " You are the Sergeant-Major, what have you got to say? "

I was so taken aback with the Captain's speech—it came so sudden like, and was so true—that I felt kind of stupefied, and although I was bursting to speak, I was a long time getting on to my feet, and before I managed it, Treasurer Hold-it-tight was up and talking.

" Captain," says he, " this debt is a very ugly thing, and it ought not to have been, and what you say about the Open-Air is a great deal worse. But this is the way to deal with such things. Bring them before us, and let us look at them together. You ask for our advice, and we will give it you, but we will do something more than advise you. You shall have no more trouble about that debt. I'll do my share, and if the Sergeant-Major will join with me, we will get the whole of it together before another fortnight has gone by." And down he sat.

By that time I was ready to say my say.

" Captain," said I, " the debt is bad, but I'm

the man to join with the Treasurer to get that wiped out. The picture you give us of the wretched condition of the Open-Air is bad; but if my Local comrades feel as I do, and will join hands with me, we will change all that very soon. Then, Captain," says I, "bad as these things are, my heart is glad to-day to think that you should come and talk to us, and treat us as your real comrades in carrying on the work of the Corps, as you have done at this meeting. We'll pay the debt, and if everybody feels as I do, we will have such Open-Airs before many weeks are past as Darkington has not seen in its most prosperous times."

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Before we parted we made arrangements for giving or collecting the debt amongst us, without mentioning it to the outside world; and resolved, with regard to the Open-Air:—

1. That, in addition to the old stand, at which we have stood for five years gone by, two new ones should at once be opened—one the next week, another the week after.
2. We pledged ourselves to a man to take some part at least in two meetings on the coming Sunday and regularly afterwards.
3. We arranged for a plan of Locals and

Soldiers to be drawn up as speakers, and to see that they attended.

4. We parted, loving one another and our dear Corps, and the Open-Air work, and the Officers more than we had done for a long time gone by. The troubles that had lain so heavily upon the Captain, and hung like such a black shadow on the Corps, rightly dealt with, had been turned into blessings.

Three volleys for the Local Officers' Meeting !

CHAPTER XI.

ON SAVING YOUR OWN RELATIONS.

CAPTAIN FAITHFUL—but, by the way, I don't know whether I have told you as how as that is our Captain's name, which I ought to have done; but if I didn't you'll excuse me, and put it down to my being no scholar, which Sarah is. You see, when I was a boy I was more used to playing truant, or wild games, or doing odd jobs about the house than learning lessons; so I grew up without much schooling. But that is a long time ago; and, after I got converted, I says to myself, "Do-your-best, there's no knowing what important things you'll be called to do now that you're a Soldier in The Salvation Army, and so you must learn something."

So I set to work to teach myself, with Sarah's assistance, and now that I'm come to be Sergeant-Major of Darkington No. I Corps, I'm glad that I did, for how else could I have discharged my important duties if I had not? And I'm not too proud now, although I'm getting on in life, to

keep on learning a little whenever there's a chance.

Well, Captain Faithful—for that's his name, as I say, and a proper name it is, for it matches the man—he's just won the hearts of our Soldiers right off; although how he came to do it so sudden, it would puzzle me to tell. You see, he made a good start by attacking the devil on his own ground as he did that night at the fair; and then the Confessional Meeting, which I told you of in last chapter, made a great impression. It did on Sarah, anyway, for she's been quite a different woman ever since. But it is not these things only that has set us up with him.

So far as I can make out, it has come about very much through his straight dealing with us all; for he is a faithful Captain, and no mistake. When he talks, he don't stop to ask whether it will please or displease anybody. He just seems to be trying to show us where we are weak or wrong, or where we come short of our duty, and that not merely to find fault so as to make us wretched, and nothing more—like Captain Searchem, God bless him!—seemed to be always after; but he just wants to point out where we are wrong, in order that he may help us to get right, and to keep right. Long life to him!

When I hear our Captain, I never think about

his abilities, nor his looks, nor his voice, nor his fine talk, nor his Bible knowledge, nor anything else about him; but my thoughts always go to where I come short, and what I ought to feel and do, and how I ought to pray for the poor sinners round about me, and such-like things.

Still, after all, that Confessional Meeting was a wonderful affair, and no mistake; and there was a rare lot of talk about it in the Corps afterwards. The old folks said it was the very best meeting they had ever been in, in all their lives. But there, that is what they always say about the last good meeting. Anyway, it was a precious time; but I think the Friday night's Holiness Meeting that followed was more useful still. I only wish I could describe it; but I reckon that nobody can put a good Salvation Army Meeting down on paper. You have to be there, and take part in it yourself, to know what it is like. Still, let me try.

To begin, I think, if I had to give it a name, I should call it a meeting for your own flesh and blood.

I suppose there were half as many again present as at regular times. That's what I am always a-telling of our Officers. "Captain," I say, "the way to increase our attendances is to make the meetings more interesting. Nothing

draws like hot and happy meetings; they fetch the people."

Well, as I have said, we had a nice little crowd, and there was a lively beginning; and then the Captain, he set the ball a-rolling.

"Comrades," he said, "last week we had a Confessional Meeting, and a blessed time it was. I got a great lift myself. I have been walking closer to God, and feeling more about eternal things all the past week than I think I have ever done before. God helped me that night to acknowledge where I saw that I had come short, and to give myself up afresh for the doing of His blessed will, and—to His honour and glory I say it—He has kept me faithful to my promise."

And then he went on: "Comrades," says he, "how has it been with you? Last Sunday, you, too, confessed your shortcomings and neglects, and the different ways in which you had grieved the Holy Spirit. But you will be no forrarder for that unless you do different in the future. Indeed," says he, "that meeting will rise against you in black condemnation at the Judgment Day unless you do better.

"You complain of the Catholics confessing their sins, and then going and doing the same again, just as if nothing had happened. Now, aren't you in danger of acting very much after

the same fashion? And if you do, what better will you be for it all? Think a bit," says he: "it's not only confession of sin that you want; it's *salvation from sinning*.

"And then," he went on, growing more solemn every moment, "some of you," he said, "confessed last Sunday morning that you hadn't done your duty by the souls of your relations—and well you might. I have been reckoning with my own heart on that very score myself. But I'm going to do better, God helping me, and I want you to do the same.

"I am ashamed to know that there are Salvation Soldiers who have fathers and mothers who are unsaved—fathers and mothers who nursed them in infancy, and fed and cared for them in after years—fathers and mothers who are not far from the grave, not far from Hell."

As the Captain said these words, a shudder went through the meeting. "Oh!" he went on, "think of having a father or a mother wandering about the caverns of despair—a father or mother who is a lost soul!

"There are Salvationist parents who have sons and daughters living in open rebellion against God, despisers of His mercy, and trampers on the blood of His Son.

"There are Salvationists who have sons and

daughters living in sin, under its mastery, in ignorance of the fact that it may carry them to lives of shame in the streets, to lives of ignominy in prison, to fill a drunkard's grave in a cemetery, or—lower still—to lie down among the damned in Hell.

"There are Salvationists—alas! alas! where are they not?—who have brothers and sisters, or other relations, who are travelling to destruction. What is to be done for them?

"Now," said the Captain, "I don't know you nor your families as I hope to do—I have only just come among you; but I have no doubt that what I have said applies to some—perhaps a great many—who are here. There is some one in your home circle for whose salvation God has in some special manner made you responsible, and I want to ask you a question about them." Here the Captain made quite a long pause, and then he asked his question:

"If your father, mother, wife, or children were in a house on fire, would you not feel a special responsibility to get them out? If they were sick and ready to die, would you let them go to the grave without having done what you could to save them?

"Now, is it not true that some of your relations are in their sins, going down to destruction, and

will be cast into the fires of Hell before many years, months, perhaps days, are gone, unless they are got to the Saviour's feet? Have you done what in you lies to save them?

"Have you done what you could by your entreaties and your example?"

Then the Captain, in a most serious manner, said, "Let those who have discharged this responsibility to the satisfaction of their own consciences, stand up on their feet before us all."

Then came another pause—a long pause; the Captain waited, but nobody stood; no, not a soul. I looked at Sarah, and Sarah looked back at me; it was an awful look that she gave me. Sarah has wonderful eyes, and she can make them say anything she likes when she chooses; and sometimes they do talk, I can tell you; and this time they said, almost as plain as words could have expressed it: "You sit still, Sergeant-Major; you cannot stand, and no more can I," and so we all sat there in dead silence for I don't know how long.

And then the Captain said, "Now, what are we to do? There are two courses open to us:—

"First, we can go on just as we have been going, in which case we cannot expect anything different in the future from what we have had in the past, and can therefore reckon on the members

of our own families, our own flesh and blood, going on in their sins and being lost.

"The second course for us to take is, to set to work with all our might to get them saved. So I want you to go down before God and tell Him—

"1. That you will start afresh from to-night to pray for them.

"2. That you will make desperate efforts to get them to the meetings.

"3. That you will begin anew to plead with them personally."

We spent a few minutes on our knees in silence, broken only by sobs and groans, and then the meeting closed.

We walked a good part of the way home that night—that is, Sarah and I—before a word was spoken; and then I said, "Well, wife, what do you think of that for a Holiness Meeting?"

"What do I think about that meeting, Sergeant-Major?" said she. "I will tell you what I think about that meeting. I think that that man has been sent by God to show me my sins, in neglecting to seek the salvation of my own flesh and blood; and when I looked at them to-night as I sat in that Hall, I felt condemned for my neglect, and that I deserved to be sent to Hell right away."

Now, this was awful, was it not?—and I said :

"Sarah, Sarah, you always was too hard on yourself; and what you're saying now is too dreadful to think about; for," says I, "aren't you my wife? and aren't you a good woman? and aren't you converted? Yes, Sarah, you are. I never shall forget the night when we knelt together at that blessed penitent-form. And then, Sarah," I says, "I believe you are sanctified as well."

To this she answered rather sharp. "Sergeant-Major," says she, "don't talk like that. How can I be a good woman, and sanctified, and all the rest of it, while I am content to be going to Heaven knowing all the time that my poor old father, who is nearly eighty years old, is going —" And then she burst into a fit of weeping, and her sobs were so loud, that I thought that a policeman, who just happened to be passing, would think that we were having words.

"No," she said, as soon as she could speak. "To-night I have seen what real religion is as I have never seen it before. It is not only singing, and talking, and praying, and giving, although that is very important on Self-Denial Week, but it is love. But if so be as we don't love the souls of our own flesh and blood, and care for them as well, how can we pretend to have the love of Christ in us?

"But, bless the dear Lord, I have got a little love for my dear old father, and I mean to have him saved, if I can manage it; and, to get it done, I shall give him no rest, and I shall give myself no rest, and—I say it with all the respect which a poor woman like me should feel—I shall give my Heavenly Father no rest until the work is done."

When we got into the house, she poked up the fire, and got me out the bread, and then she says: "Sergeant-Major, you can just boil the milk yourself, and when you've had your supper I recommend you to kneel down there," pointing to my chair in the corner, "and pray for your poor backslidden brother, who'll be at the left hand of the Judgment bar soon if somebody don't care about him; and who should that somebody be but his own brother?"

Then I says, "Sarah, what are *you* going to do? It is past ten o'clock, and you must be faint."

"Yes," she says, "I know the time, but I feel that I can't either eat or sleep until I have done something for my poor father's soul; and I am going to write him a letter this very night before I see my bed." And then she broke out weeping again, and as she left me I could hear her saying, "O God, spare my poor father until I get him into the fountain!"

I can tell you I did not want any supper after this. I just went down alongside my old chair, as Sarah had recommended me to do, and began to cry to God to save my brother Jim. But I had hardly got my heart settled to my work before a gentle tap came at the door. As I opened it a poor crippled old woman pushed her way inside. It was Will Boozham's mother. She dropped down on the first seat she came to, quite exhausted; but as soon as she recovered her breath, she stammered out, "I thought you would not be gone to bed. I've been at the meeting; I see it all; my heart is fair broken about my Tom."

I knew something about Tom. He was the wildest rake of a wild family, and had got, somehow or other, into Portland Prison. "Oh," cried the poor old creature, "now that Bill has got so beautifully saved, if I could only get Tom converted I could die in peace! Oh, it's all through my neglect! What can I do? What can I do for my poor prodigal boy? Can you help me? I thought perhaps you would write to the Prison-Gate Department in London. I felt sure you would. What can I do? O Lord, save my Tom!"

CHAPTER XII.

MORE ON SAVING YOUR OWN RELATIONS.

Now that "Your-own-flesh-and-blood Meeting," which I was telling you about in the last chapter, was a real powerful affair, and no mistake. My word, it did make a mark on our Corps. I liked it myself immensely. It was just what I am always saying.

"Captain," says I, the next time I met him, "this is what I have been telling our Officers for years"—and so I have. "Set the Soldiers a-doing something on their own account, and then you will see what you will see."

Anyway, that meeting started everybody praying, and that was a good thing. Bless them, I don't think a soul of them went to bed that night without crying to God on behalf of every relation they had in the world—mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters, and all the rest, saved and unsaved, dead and alive—for I have no doubt that without knowing it some of them prayed for relations that had been in the next world for many a day.

And then some strong letters were written that I knew about besides Sarah's, and a good many invitations were given to relations and old chums to come to the meetings before the week was out.

After that we all wondered what the Captain was a-going to do next, and when he talked it over with us at the next Local Officers' Meeting, we encouraged him so much with what we had to report about the blessedness of the last meeting that he at once decided to have another of the same sort, and we all promised to do what we could to make it a success. And you will easily believe that we had a nice bit of prayer about it before we parted. God bless the Captain! Everybody is beginning to love him very much.

But before the second meeting came off something else happened that made a great sensation amongst us. I told you before how Mother Boozham was in such distress about her son, Tom. It seems that he had enlisted in the Navy, and soon after had written to say that he had been converted and joined The Salvation Army. But before the old woman had well taken in the joyful news, by some means or other she learned that he had committed a serious offence, for which he had been sent to Blankland Prison.

Well, I promised to see the Captain, and get him to inquire at Headquarters if they could find anything out about the prodigal, and that if he could be found they were to tell him to write at once to his mother, as she was a-dying of grief for him and for his salvation.

Well, by and by, the information came, and the Captain had a letter from Headquarters. I will give you a piece of it:—

"DEAR CAPTAIN,—After inquiry, we find that Tom Boozham enlisted in the Navy some time ago, and for awhile led a very rackety life. Being passionate and impulsive, he was always getting into rows, and having to suffer the consequences. But meeting with some Salvationist Blue Jackets, he was tackled by them, got on to his knees, and properly converted.

"His ship was ordered into the Mediterranean, and he was soon known as the most earnest Leaguer on the Station. But, unfortunately, some officer on the vessel persecuted him with great bitterness on account of his religion. Tom bore it bravely for a time, then gave way, went back in his soul, lost his temper, kicked the officer, and was sentenced to ten years' penal servitude for the offence.

"In Blankland Prison he again sought God, found forgiveness, and was restored to the favour of his Heavenly Father, and is now getting his fellow-prisoners saved. A little time back I paid him a visit, and instead of being taken to the cage to see him, attended by two Warders, as is the custom, I had leave to see him in a private room

with only one Warder, who allowed us to have a prayer meeting. I had a Blue Jacket for an escort, and you may depend upon it we had a good time.

"Yours very faithfully,

"_____.

"P.S.—After he has received permission, Tom will write to his mother by the first post. He was not aware that she knew of his disgrace, and wanted to spare her feelings, or he would have written before."

Directly after this letter arrived there came one from Tom to his mother, full of tenderness and thankfulness for the news of his brother Will's conversion, and the two together filled the dear old lady with such delight, that she insisted on having one written back as soon as possible.

She told Sarah just the words that she wanted to say to Tom, who had always been her favourite boy; and Sarah she wrote it all out proper, I can tell you, which—as she is a scholar, and I am not, more's the pity—she was well able to do! I wish I could give it to you just as Sarah wrote it, for it was very touching.

But there is another event which has happened, and a very sad one it is. And this is how it came about. You see, Will Boozham, whom you will remember was converted on that fair night, when the good fortunes of our Corps really commenced—oh, won't we have a go, if I am spared to see

to it when the next fair comes round ! " We'll storm the forts of darkness," and no mistake.

But I was saying that Will Boozham has done so well, and gone on so steady, and has got so much pluck and fire in him, and so much love for his old drunken pals, that last week the Captain made him the Sergeant of a Public-House Brigade. The first Saturday night they were out they did wonders, and actually brought a cousin of Will's, a young fellow of only twenty, out of the " Blue Moon," took him to the Hall, and got him saved.

Well, this all added to dear old Mother Boozham's excitement. " To only think," said she to Sarah, who went in to cheer her up with the news—" to only think that my son, such a scapegrace as he was, nearly killing his wife and starving his bairns to death with his wicked ways, should now be an Officer in this blessed Army, and the means of saving my nephew Bob, who was the brightest son of my dear sister Polly, who is now in Heaven. Only think, only think ! " And as she said these words she fell back in her chair. It was too much for her poor body, and a kind of seizure came over her. They carried her to bed, where soon after she died.

Dear old soul, I shall never forget her last hours. She would have us all there; that is

Will and his wife and the children, the Captain, and Sarah and me, and as many other folks as could crowd into the room. I believe she would have liked to die in the Hall, and had all the Corps there, if it could have been possible.

When the last hour came, a strange fit of strength came over her, and she talked like a Staff Officer; nay, I might say like an angel from Heaven. I tell you, it was real wonderful.

"Dear friends," says she, "stand true to the Blood-and-Fire Flag. Where is it?" And she would not be satisfied till she could have it in the room, and so we sent Jim Grumbleton—who had just come in to see how things were going—up to the Hall to bring it, and when we had fixed it up right before her, she started afresh.

"Friends," said she, "stick to that Flag, stick to The Army. See what it has done for my poor soul, and for my family. There's my Tom, my dear Tom;" and then she broke down and could go no further for a time, and we all cried together. And then she said: "Send Tom his mother's dying blessing."

And then, turning to Will, she said: "Now, Will, you will persevere, for your poor old mother's sake, and your wife's and the children's sake;" and then she had all the family kiss her for the last time; and then she said: "Now,

Will, promise me you'll be true to your vows, true to your Lord;" and then she said, thinking at the moment of poor Will having got wrong in the days gone by, "If ever you do fall, which God forbid, stick to The Army and go to the meetings; yes, Will, *go to the meetings*. Whatever happens, drunk or sober, go to the meetings."

And then she seemed to forget us all, and looking up in a vacant sort of way, her face came all so bright; as Sarah said, she looked quite young again; and then she gasped, "My Jesus, I love Thee, I know——." And with a long sigh and another gasp, she was gone.

The funeral made a great mark on Darkington, I can tell you. The first service was in the yard in front of the Hall, and Deacon Propriety, Will's master, was present. He told the Captain before the meeting that he would pay all the expenses of the burial, which he did most cheerfully. And this was a good thing, for Will, on whose shoulders the burden would have fallen, is still struggling to pay the debts of his drunken days.

The procession to the cemetery, and the service by the grave, and the Memorial Service that followed, were all beautiful; but I have not time to speak about them. I want to tell you about the second "Your-own-flesh-and-blood Meeting," which I said Captain Faithful had told us in the

Local Officers' Meeting that he was going to hold.

It came off on the very Tuesday night after the funeral, and was strictly confined to Soldiers, and what with one thing and what with another, there was quite a number there. I never saw such a lot of Soldiers at one meeting before, except on some great festival night. After the opening ceremonies, the Captain began in right good earnest by laying the story of Mother Boozham's dying message on our hearts. It was a straight bit of talk, I can tell you.

"Now," says he, "who can tell which of us, who are here, will go next; but, whoever it is, I want you to do your duty to your own 'flesh and blood' before you go; which you shall, if I can bring it about. That is what I am after this evening. God has given us great encouragement. But let us go on. Let us be practical. O Lord, help me to help every one of you." And then he talked to us about prayer.

"Prayer," he said, "is a wonderful thing. God answers prayer." And then he talked a bit on that passage—"If two of you shall agree on earth as touching anything that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My Father which is in Heaven."

"And now," he said, "I want those who

have unsaved relations for whom they desire our prayers to signify it by standing up before God and before us. And first," he said, "let those husbands who have unconverted wives, for whom they desire our prayers, stand on their feet."

At once, I should think a dozen sprang up. With one or two, I observed a little hesitation. Jim Grumbleton was one of those who hung back. He has just married that worldly girl of whom I told you, and gone and done it with his eyes open. She was not there; and perhaps he thought she would not like him to make her unconverted state known to the Corps—as if every one of us did not know it already!—and think he was very foolish for having done as he had done.

"Be honest," said the Captain. "If you have wives whom you have reason to think are on the way to Heaven, sit still.

"If you have unsaved wives, who are on the way to Hell, and you think standing up and saying so will hinder rather than help you to get them put right, sit still.

"If you have unsaved wives, and don't want our prayers, sit still.

"But if you have unsaved wives, and want our prayers for them, stand up."

Here Jim Grumbleton, who at the bottom is a

true fellow, struggled to his feet. It was a melancholy confession to make, but he made it.

Then the Captain went through much the same form of things with the other classes. First he called for the wives to stand up who had unsaved husbands. There were nearly twenty of them. My heart did ache as I looked over them. As to Sarah, she must have had that "fountain of waters" in her head that night that Jeremiah prayed about, for she cried all the time, right away from the beginning to the end of the service.

Then the Captain called out for the fathers and mothers who had unsaved children to stand up, and then for the children who had unsaved parents, for whom our prayers were asked.

Of this last class there were not very many, but Sarah and myself were amongst them. "Now," said the Captain, "if you wish our prayers for the salvation of your fathers and mothers, hold up your hands."

Here Sarah completely broke down, and could not hold in any longer. "Captain," says she, "my poor old father is nearly eighty. His hair is white, and he has got one foot in the grave; but he is coming to see me next week, and I'll thank you all on my bended knees if you'll pray that God may save him before he returns home. Oh," said she, "how could I live, if he was to

die out of Christ, and leave me behind a-thinking of him being in Hell, when I'm expecting to get safe landed in Heaven with the Sergeant-Major and all my boys and girls. No, no, no ! ”

“ Now,” says the Captain, “ I want you all to go down before God, and honestly tell Him two things :—

“ 1. *I want you to tell Him what you have done for the salvation of those for whom you want us to pray.*” And then spoke a word about what God had done for our relations, and said : “ Now, what have you done for them yourselves ?

“ How much special prayer have you offered ? Think,” said he, “ and answer, not to me, but to God !

“ How many direct efforts have you made to get your relations saved ? Think,” said he, “ and answer, not to me, but to God !

“ How many times have you striven to get them to the meetings ? Think,” said he, “ and answer, not to me, but to God !

“ What kind of an example have you set before them ? Think,” said he, “ and answer, not to me, but to God !

“ 2. *And now,*” he said, “ *I want you to tell God what you will do for them in the future. What will you do to get them saved?*”

Here there was a time of solemn silence.

CHAPTER XIII.

SOME RULES FOR MEETINGS.

Now I understand that the humble opinions I have expressed above, have given offence to some of my old Captains, and I am downright sorry for that, because it is one of my particular rules to stand up for my Officers and support their authority. I always have done it, and always shall do it while I am Sergeant-Major of this Corps.

And now, here is Captain Windy, God bless him ! writing to our Secretary and saying that he is real offended, and will never come near our Corps again if he can help it. Now, that seems to me to be a great pity for Captain Windy's own sake, because I have often heard him say that he didn't think he would die in The Army; and I always took that to mean that if he had a chance of a decent living out of it, he would not object to leaving it.

And, now, here is Miss Pinkem, who was

brought up at a boarding school, and got married to our baker; she told our Sarah the other day that her husband, who is a deacon of a sect they call "The Superior People," wanted to hear Captain Windy again, as he thought that his oratory style would just suit their taste; and now the Captain says he won't come near us again, and so he will lose this chance. However, if people will stand in their own light, it is not for such humble folks as I am to go against them.

Then Captain Gentleton told our Lieutenant, at the Officers' Meeting last week, that I had no business to have opinions about other people, and that all the opinions belonged to the Field Officers. But, then, how can I help having opinions? You see, they come up whether you will or no.

And, now, here is Captain Swellum writing to say that, if I did have such opinions, I ought to keep them to myself, that nobody wants to hear them, and he says in the letter that I am a pessimist!

Now, I don't think it right for Captains to call their Local Officers hard names; much less Captain Swellum, for whom I have done many a good turn. But I have not the least idea what that word means, and I can't find anyone in our Corps who can explain it. Sergeant Earn-your-

bread says he thinks it has something to do with "peas;" but Tom Hardnut, who used to go to circuses and such places before he was saved, thinks it is a wrong word, and should be "possumist," which means a kind of big rabbit, that has two long legs and two short ones, which you find in foreign countries; but Mary Holdfast, who has had the best education of anybody in the Corps, says it means what is fantastic; which is, having strange fads and such things.

Well, Captain Swellum says that I am a pessimist, and ought to keep my opinions to myself, and not go about putting them into other people's minds.

But our Sarah says that the Captain's wife read it all over to her and Mary Holdfast out of her husband's paper, and Sarah says that they all thought that they were the solemn truth, and that they had no idea that I was so clever in the literary line, and that they thought it ought to go into "The War Cry."

But I want to finish my speech about our Captain; and I'll have my say, if I can. I was telling you when I left off that I liked him because he gets people saved.

Now, I don't want anybody to think that other Captains don't get people saved. I am thankful to say that we never had an Officer in

our Corps who did not get people to the penitent-form; we should all have been very unhappy if we had.

There was Captain Thunderer, who was here when I got converted. Didn't he try for my soul that blessed night. He gave it to me strong, I can tell you. I think I can hear him now, telling all about a drunkard and his wife and his family in Hell. Oh! it was a picture. I thought I could see myself and Sarah, and the children all in the pit together; and I thought I could hear them all cursing their father for leading them there; and I thought while they were cursing me, that I was cursing the landlord of the "Swan with Two Necks" for selling me the drink. My word! I was glad to get to that penitent-form, I assure you.

All our dear Officers try to save the people; but our Captain seems to go straighter for it than some of them do. You feel that he means it on a Sunday night in his song, and in his prayer, and in his preaching; and if he doesn't succeed when he's done his talk, he doesn't give it up for a bad job, but goes to work fishing, bless him! He won't let the poor sinners perish, if he can help it.

Now, our Captain knows how to fish. He's what I call downright clever at the business.

You should see him give the Song Book to the Lieutenant, and step down off the platform.

Of course, he likes to see the sinners come forward, and fall down and cry out for mercy while he's talking, or directly he invites them. But, if they don't, he says : " Well, it's our duty, to make them." He says we aren't willing to let people have their own way when they are ill, and go wrong in their heads, and won't take the physic. He says : " We don't say when that happens, ' Well, they must do as they think best, and, if they die, they die ! ' No," he says : " We won't let them die, and so we make them take the physic."

And then he tells a story that once he heard about a diver, who went down after a man, who had fallen overboard on the River Tyne; and how, when the diver found him, the man didn't want to be saved, and he struggled with the diver and fought him; but that the diver struck him a heavy blow on his head, and knocked him senseless, and then he let the diver take him up; and when the man came to himself he was very glad, and didn't know how to thank the diver enough for not letting him drown.

Then the Captain says : " I ain't going to let these people die in their sins, and go to Hell, if I can stop them." And so he goes for them, and

argues with them as if he was their own brother; and then he kneels down and prays for them with all the power he has.

Why, there's Tom Hardnut, he's one of the best Soldiers we have now; but he was as stupid as you could imagine before he was converted. He used to sit through the meetings, and look about him when everybody else was crying, as if he hadn't got any soul at all. But one night the Captain crept up to him in the after-meeting, and began to talk to him about his sins, and Jesus Christ, and Hell; but, bless your soul! Tommy only laughed in his face. And then the Captain fell on his knees, and began to pray. And he *did* pray. It was enough to melt a stone; and when the Captain opened his eyes and saw Tom looking as unconcerned as ever, he burst into tears, and downright sobbed again; and then Tom began to cry himself, and rushed out to the penitent-form; and I have never seen anybody seeking salvation shed such a lot of tears as Tom did that very night.

Then, there's Deborah Do-as-you-please. She's the best Junior Sergeant we have. But wasn't she a character! She used to mock until I was afraid that some day she would die with some ridiculing of religion on her lips.

Well, one night, the Divisional Officer was at

the Corps, and he had been talking about the Judgment Day, and the children of pious parents having to be parted from their fathers and mothers for ever and ever, and it was very affecting, and everybody felt so, even if they didn't show it. But Deborah, whose mother was a good woman, and died praying for her daughter, was joking with her companions, and hindering them listening, and laughing before everybody all the time.

The Captain couldn't stand it no longer; but he just went down to her seat, and sat down beside her, and talked to her about her mother so kind and tender like, that at last she gave in, and marched to the penitent-form, and got thoroughly and properly saved.

You see, he goes so gentle at first, and then warms up, and finds out where the soft place in the people's heart is; and then he puts his knife in, and breaks them down.

No! you are mistaken, our Captain does not do all the work of the Corps himself. He does all he can, and that is one reason why we like him; but the more he does himself the more there is for us to do; and, amongst the rest, he makes us fish, and teaches us how to do it.

You see, he has picked out so many Local Officers, and holds them responsible for the work, and he has us together every now and then, and

gives us advice as to how we are to do it. And then he made up some rules, and made his boy write them out on slips of paper, to save the expense of printing, and I have got mine pinned up on the wall, and I have read them over until I pretty well know them off by heart.

What are they? Well, I think I could tell you what they are. But I will fetch them for you, and you can copy them off if you like, for they are worth it. But you must let me have the copy back, because I want to keep it for the Captain's sake. Here they are:—

(1) Always lift up your heart to God, and ask Him to help you before you begin..

(2) If you sit on the platform, you should look and see if there's anybody in the congregation that you know, or who is specially laid on your heart, or who seems to be moved by what is said, or anyone who is a stranger to the Hall, or anyone whom you think you are specially likely to influence, and go first for them.

(3) If the one you make for when you begin fishing does not seem at all affected, or is quite a stranger, approach them carefully, as it won't be likely to help their salvation to offend them straight off.

(4) Ask the question as soon as you can, whether all is well between them and God; and,

if not, invite them to come out, and let Jesus Christ save them right off.

(5) Reason with them about the salvation of their souls as if Jesus Christ stood by listening to what you say.

(6) If there are no signs of yielding, give them some solemn talk about the shortness of life, and the certainty of death, and the Judgment Day, and go on to some one else. But, if there are signs of real heart-concern, get some comrades to join you, and kneel down, and cry to God to bring them to decision there and then.

Now, I reckon that these rules are proper. I have tried them, and when you have heard the Captain explain them, a child can understand them, and go and carry them out. But it is just our Captain who can make you learn things, whether you will or no. Why, I thought I knew a lot about The Army, and the Bible, and getting sinners saved before he came; but, Lord bless you! I was only a child, and knew next to nothing to what I know now; and a lot of it is because this Captain shows you how to do thing, as well as tells you about them; and that is where he is more to my fancy than any other I know.

Why, there was Captain Know-it-all, he lectured us night and day when he was in our

Corps. He was always explaining and explaining. He had lectures on lectures, and I declare I don't think I was any wiser when he went away than when he came. It was because I am stupid and ignorant, I suppose; and how can it be wondered at when you remember the way I spent my time at the "Swan with Two Necks," instead of going to church, and how I wasted my Sundays before I was converted, in reading the "Sunday Gossip," and "Sporting Times," instead of my Bible. But, then, Captain Know-it-all didn't make me much wiser, I am sorry to say, and I have learnt more in a single Sunday with our little Captain about the life of God in the soul, and the way to make people happy, than I should have done if Captain Know-it-all had lectured me for a year. And so has our Sarah.

You will see that I am real set up with our Captain.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONVERSION OF GRUMBLETON'S WIFE.

At the first Soldiers' Meeting Captain Faithful held in our Corps, we sung over and over again—

“The revolution now begin;
Send the Fire.”

That prayer has been answered. If we haven't got the revolution exactly, we have surely got a wonderful alteration.

It's what I'm always saying to Sarah. We've got all the machinery in this blessed Army to make things sit up, and the people to work it into the bargain; we only want some more steam turning on, and somebody to hold the handle that directs operations, and remarkable doings will follow.

In the first talk I had with him, the Captain said that “the Soldiers seemed rather flat, and the books didn't show a very flourishing state of affairs.”

“No,” says I, “Captain, I dare say things don't look very bright at first sight. There's no

blinking the fact, and I'm the last man to do it; Darkington No. I Corps isn't what it ought to be, and isn't what it was when Captain Blazey was here. But have a little patience with us," says I; "a Salvation Army Corps is very like the sea at Whitesands, where Sarah and I goes now and then with the Junior Excursion—which I'm not sure whether it does them much good or no. The tides rise, and then they fall, and then they rise again. Only set us to work, Captain. Give every Soldier a chance. Make us understand our duty, and let us see something done, and you'll see what you'll see, Captain. The tide what now is down a little will rise again, and Darkington will be better than ever. That's my opinion, and that's my advice."

Well, Captain Faithful took my advice, which, when a Captain does, it always works out proper—at least, it does so in general. Anyway, things is all of a bubble with us to-day, everybody is in high spirits, and everybody's expecting greater things.

True, we haven't reached boiling-point yet, which Sarah says she don't altogether desire that we should. She likes the steady way of going on, but that may be owing to her Sunday-school training. She says the "Smashem and Crashem style, and go to sleep again," isn't so much to her

mind as keeping on at it, even though it be in a quieter way. Well, I don't care if we only keep going on as we are to-day; we shall be sure to land somewhere very near to the boiling-point, if we ain't exactly at it, and that will be all right.

Now, what I've got to say I'm going to put up into divisions, like the writing people do; and so here goes.

You see, the first thing that has happened that I want to tell you about has been the wonderful conversion of Jim Grumbleton's wife.

You will remember about her. She was a gay, proud, worldly woman. How Jim took up with her I never could imagine, because he was a red-hot lad when he was first converted, and was the most earnest and determined chap I had in my Public-House Brigade, until he fell in with this girl. However, they courted, and he married her, and went back in his soul, and was of no mortal use to the Corps, until that "Your-own-flesh-and-blood Meeting," when he broke down, and vowed to God that he would have his young wife saved, or know the reason why.

I told you in my last letter that she was sick, and had sent for Sarah. Why she wanted her, Sarah could not make out, for the last time they met at the Hall she had dealt very faithfully with her about her soul, and her responsibility to God

and The Army as the wife of Sergeant Grumbleton. She told her straight and plain that she might be a blessing to him, and that if she did not mind she would be a curse to him and the children.

But Mrs. Grumbleton only tossed her head, and said that she had been properly brought up, and knew all about religion, without being taught by the Salvationists. Indeed, she as good as told Sarah to mind her own business, and not interfere with her.

However, when Sarah got the invitation to go and see her, she quietly said: "This sickness spells salvation." I could not help asking her what made her so confident as she tied her bonnet on.

"Because of Jim's consecration," said she. "I believe he gave himself to God that night for her, and so did I. God heard us, and now He's going to answer."

She found the poor thing in dreadful agony. She'd had the most violent spasms for forty-eight hours, and other things as well that I don't understand. Her mother sat weeping by the bed. The doctor came in, and looked at her, and asked a few questions, and shook his head, and told Mrs. Cossitem, who was doing the nursing, when he got into the next room, that he was afraid it was a gone case with the poor thing.

Poor Jim, he went in and out like a ghost, which he nearly was, for he'd hardly eaten or drunk or slept for ever so long. The whole party had all but given up hope, and it was in their despair they sent for Sarah.

Now Sarah is a practical sort of a woman, and while she believes in prayer and faith—bless her ! I wish I had only half her confidence in God—she believes in works as well. And in this case she went at the business with hot fomentations, and a heap of other contrivances, and like magic she relieved the poor creature's sufferings, got her to sleep, and a few hours later surprised the doctor and Jim and everybody concerned, by declaring that the danger was passed.

A few days after this, Mrs. Grumbleton says to Sarah : “Mrs. Sergeant-Major,” says she, “I’ve been miserable ever since that ‘Your-own-flesh-and-blood Meeting.’ Jim has been like an angel ever since that night; but every word he has said, everything he has done, every look he has given me, has seemed to say : ‘Maria, I have given you to Jesus : you belong to Him. It is your turn now to give Him yourself.’ And now,” says she, “that I have done it—I did it in the agony of those two days—I feel that I must be true to Him. He has brought me back from the edge of the grave to live a new life—a life that will honour Him, and

bless my husband, and save the children and the people about me. Help me, Mrs. Sergeant-Major. Show me how to begin, and I'll do it."

She's pulled the staring flowers out of her hats, and given them to the baby to play with. She's ripped up her finery, and burnt all her novels, and ordered her uniform. Says she : " There, you see, Mrs. Sergeant-Major, it will be some time before I can wear it, although I'm mending fast; but I can have the S's on as I lie here, and I can have the Colours over my head, and my bonnet there in front of me, and I shall feel like a real Soldier right away."

The Captain's been to see her. After he prayed with her, and was preparing to leave—for she is still very weak—she says : " Captain, I want a word with you. You see," she said, " with God's blessing I shall soon be about again, and I want you to give me a post. You know I am a Sergeant's wife, and I mean soon to be a Sergeant on my own account; so I have been thinking that I would like to have a Junior Soldier Company. I'm a mother, you know, and I love the children. Let me begin my work for Jesus by leading the little ones to Him."

CHAPTER XV.

PAYING ONE'S DEBTS.

WELL, again, I told you how we agreed at that celebrated Local Officers' Meeting to clear off the Corps debt of £17, one way or another; it was such a burden on the Captain's mind. But I must confess that when I came to look at the business the day after, that the task did not appear to be such an easy one as it seemed when we were all excited together at the meeting.

However, I have always believed that "Where there's a will, there's a way"; and so the night after, I invited Treasurer Hold-it-tight to come down to our place to talk the matter over; and after laying our heads together, we agreed on a plan of campaign. We said to the Captain, "Now, Captain, you must call a Soldiers' Meeting, and say that it is special and important, without telling anybody what it is about; nobody but Soldiers to be admitted."

Well, the meeting came round, and the Captain set it going with singing and prayer, and made his

announcements about the coming meetings, and then sat down; but no sooner was he down than up jumped the Treasurer, and told the story of the debt in almost the same words that the Captain had used in bringing it before us Locals. He did it real clever.

Then, somehow or other, he goes off into a prayer for the Corps, and the poor sinners, and the backsliders, and I know not who else, begging the dear Lord to take this debt out of the road, which was such a trouble to the Captain, and such a hindrance to the Corps. I never heard him pray like it. He got regular excited, which was wonderful in a Treasurer; and I'm blest if he didn't break out a-crying right in the middle!

It was quite a time before he came to himself, and then he says: "Captain, things aren't very smiling at our house just now! The strike hit the tailoring business rather hard; and then my wife's sickness came along; but I'm going 'o give a sovereign to get rid of this debt, though it takes a bit of a squeeze." And down he sat once more.

Then Sarah, she gave me such a shove that nearly landed me on the top of Mrs. Never-grow-old, who is somewhere over eighty, and who reckons, on account of her being such a female Methusala, that she has the undisputed right to the front seat at every kind of a meeting.

"Sergeant-Major," says Sarah, loud enough to be heard across the place, "you've got to do the same!"

"Sarah!" says I, in a whisper, "look at my coat. This is my Sunday best," and I showed her a patch on the sleeve.

But she simply says back: "Trust in God for a new coat, and you shall have it. But you've got to follow the example of the Treasurer." That settled it; so my twenty shillings was booked.

Then Grumbleton came with a thank-offering for having his wife spared to him; and, I tell you, his words had a wonderful effect; and then almost everybody else in the place followed on, some with bigger and some with lesser sums.

Then, to the surprise of us all, Will Boozham got up, and with tears in his voice, said: "I want to give a thank-offering of a sovereign." On this we all looked at one another; but before a whisper was heard, Jack Take-care-of-yourself was on his feet making a speech about what he would like to do himself, but that he thought people should be "just before they were generous, and pay their debts, and put some clothes on the backs of their children, and see to the wants of their own household."

Now, Jack is the son of a grocer, and we felt that he was not so much excusing himself, because

he has no household to provide for, and no children to clothe, as he was hitting at Will Boozham; and two or three were ready enough to answer. But there was no need, for Boozham was on his feet as soon as he had a chance, to answer for himself.

"Comrades," he says, "Brother Take-care-of-yourself says that I ought to be just before I'm generous, and to pay my debts, and clothe my children, and other things, before I give my money away to the Corps—because I suppose he means me.

"Well, I want to tell him that I'm trying to do something in that way. Among other things, I'm hard on at paying my debts, and I shall soon have rubbed off the publican's score, and my debts at the grocery, and the butcher's bill will soon be gone, besides a lot of other things of the same sort.

"But there is another debt that lies heavy on my conscience, and which I think calls for my attention, and that is the debt I owe the Captain here, and the Sergeant-Major, and my comrades all about me.

"Two years ago my little Bob had the typhus fever, and, although I was only a poor character at the time, I loved that boy, and I kept sober for a whole month while I thought he was going to die; and when the doctor pulled him through, I

was very grateful to him, and paid him his bill with real pleasure.

"Now, you all know that, a little time ago, I was a poor helpless drunkard. Nobody except my poor starved wife and children cared a button about me. You saved me. You came after me, and rescued me from the lions' den. It was the luckiest day of my life for me, and it was a grand day for my family. I shall never stop praising God for it.

"You saved my soul and the souls of my wife and my children for the next world. *But you saved me for this life as well.* I reckoned up one day that, in wasted time, money spent, and things destroyed, I am fifteen shillings a week in pocket in money alone. Let Brother Take-care-of-yourself reckon up how much that comes to for the weeks I have been in this blessed Corps, and the weeks I am going to stay in it, and then say if he don't think it high time I set about paying some of the debt I owe it."

Then, turning to the Captain, he says: "Captain, there's nothing worth calling generous in the promise I've just made: it is only a small instalment of justice; and, if you'll wait a few weeks for payment, I think I'll make it thirty shillings, and you can reckon that there's more to follow on the same line, for my debt will never be paid."

When Boozham finished, those of us who

weren't crying were shouting, and, before the meeting closed, £10 out of the seventeen wanted was promised, and we all got our souls blessed into the bargain.

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The next day, Deacon Propriety, going round the mill, fell on Boozham, and asked him—as he always does—how they were getting on at the Hall. Whereon Boozham, with his eye on the main chance, told him about the previous night's meeting, saying nothing about the part he took in it himself.

The Deacon was so pleased that he put his hand in his pocket at once, and pulled out the seven sovereigns wanted to make up the balance, saying that their people were having a meeting at the church that very night to get an old debt off the organ, and that the beautiful generosity of these poor Salvationists would make him a good illustration for his speech. The Deacon loves The Salvation Army—and so ought every other Deacon !

CHAPTER XVI.

THE OPEN-AIR MEETING.

Now, you'll remember that I told you in my last that our Open-Air work was only in a very middling way; but, my word! haven't we got a move up since then, and aren't things changed for the better outside as well as in! That they are, and no mistake. I don't think our Open-Air doings was ever much better—perhaps never as good, in the palmiest days of Darkington.

How has it all come about? Well, I'll tell you as far as I can; but such a-many things have had to do with it, that it would take a better scholar than your humble servant to make it plain.

The improvement began at the Local Officers' Meeting—which I'm glad to say the Captain keeps up every week. If he can't do a long meeting he does a short one—always long enough, however, to cheer us up, and show us that he has got his eye on all that is happening in the Corps.

Well, as you'll remember, several new things

about our Open-Airs were settled upon that particular night—as I told you at the time—and the Captain, he's invented ever so many more since. But I can only tell you of one now; and that is, that every now and then he appoints particular Soldiers—whether Locals or no, he does not care much, if he thinks they can do the job—to lead special meetings at particular places. Sometimes the place will be a new one, and sometimes it will be the old one.

The first meeting of this kind was announced on a Sunday evening, and made a nice little sensation. In a quiet way, the Captain gave out that our Sarah would conduct an Open-Air on Thursday night, opposite "The Pig and Whistle."

I knew nothing about the matter beforehand, and the announcement nearly took my breath away. Everybody in the Hall looked at Sarah, and Sarah did not know which way to look herself, so she looked straight down at her shoes, that had been soled and heeled the week before. But it wasn't the shoes that was in her thoughts, you may depend upon it. Her mind had wandered away to "The Pig and Whistle," and was full of the new work that had come to her so unexpectedly.

As we walked home that night, we had quite a long conversation.

"What do you mean to do, Sarah?" says I.

"Do?" says she. "Why, I mean to do my duty. What else would you have me do? The Captain says I am to lead a meeting next Thursday night opposite 'The Pig and Whistle'; and this I shall do, if God spares me. What is the good of having a Captain, if you don't obey his orders?"

"But how will you get through it?" says I. "Haven't you been ill lately, and isn't your father coming to see you in a day or two, and haven't you——?"

"How shall I get through?" she broke in upon my speech. "Get through," says she, "as best I can. God will help me, as you say He helps you."

"But can you manage to control a crowd in the streets? There's sure to be some roughs, and some drunken men, and some——"

"How can I tell," again Sarah interrupted me, "till I try?"

"But, Sarah," says I, "you have never led a meeting indoors, much more out of doors."

"More's the pity!" says she. "I should have done hundreds, and perhaps been a Sergeant-Major, like you, if I had been a man; but as I am only a woman, no one has thought it worth while trying to find out what I can do till now."

"But, then, remember the place the Captain

has selected for you, opposite 'The Pig and Whistle,' where the landlord hates us so, because of Boozham, and where they flung their filthy beer over my new uniform, and where they curse and groan at any Salvationist who goes near the door. Who knows what they will do to you?"

"Oh, God will take care of us," Sarah quietly answered, "as you say He takes care of you."

"But you will be a lot of women!"

"Well, and if we are, I suppose that won't shut us out of His protection. But who told you, Sergeant-Major, that we should be all women? The women help the men generally; why not the men help the women in return?"

It was no use me saying any more about the difficulties; so we committed them to God, and prayed for His blessing on the meeting.

On Thursday night I was away at Outpost duty, but I heard full particulars on my return; for Sergeant Talky and his wife, and Sally and two or three other Soldiers, were in the house waiting to tell me the news.

It seems they'd had a nice lot of Soldiers and a good crowd. The people listened, the landlord of the pub lent them a chair—at least, his wife did—they had a capital collection, several people were deeply impressed, and a man and his wife sought salvation at the drum.

Of course, I could see how it all came about at a glance, and at once set to work to show them the reason for their success. First, I said, there was the novelty of the new stand; then there was the fact that it was the Sergeant-Major's wife; and then there was something else, and something else.

"No," says Sarah, "I don't think you are right this time, Sergeant-Major; you're a knowing kind of man, much cleverer than your poor little wife; but I don't think those were the reasons for our good meeting. I will tell you why I think we got on so well. Here they are:—

"A few of my comrades agreed with me to pray and believe for a good meeting. That was the first thing.

"Then I made my plans beforehand, just as I would for a washing, and talked them over with those who were going to help me.

"I bargained with the Bandmaster to bring as many of his Bandsmen with him as he could, and to be there in time, and gave him two of the songs I wanted to sing.

"I got Will Boozham to promise that he would give us five minutes on the happiness of a Salvation life—and he could speak from experience.

"I got a promise from Mrs. Grumbleton, that she would tell us how God had brought her back

from the borders of the grave, saved her soul, and made her into a Soldier.

"I took our girl Sally—who is a Corps Cadet, as you know—to read six verses out of the Bible.

"I got the Treasurer's daughter to sing my favourite solo :—

'The thorns they were pierced on His beautiful brow,
To pardon a rebel like me.'

"I only allowed five minutes for the collection, and told Treasurer Hold-it-tight that I was going to stick to Regulation.

"Of course I had a turn. I took off my cape, and tied my bonnet on tight, and went in for ten minutes with all my might for their souls, talking like a dying woman to dying people, and offered salvation on the spot.

"And, bless the Lord ! the Holy Spirit succeeded us; and He will succeed everybody else, weak or strong, who do the same."

After Sarah was finished, we all knelt down, and she prayed, and I cried out : "O Lord, give me more faith for Darkington, and open my eyes to see that our dear old Army is only just beginning, after all ! "

CHAPTER XVII.

HOW TO SETTLE LITTLE TROUBLES.

WE'VE been having a little trouble at Darkington Corps since I wrote you last.

We were getting on fine up till then—congregations grand, collections better than ever I can remember, the Juniors rising—and Sarah says that our Corps Cadets, one of whom is Will Boozham's eldest boy, will please the heart of the Chief of the Staff, she is sure !

The new plans for the Open-Air have worked like magic. The Locals have doubled in number, and are twice as useful. I think soon we shall all be Locals, and that's what the Captain says we ought to be. He says he's heard The General say that every Soldier ought to have a job, and somebody to look after him, and see that he does it; and if that isn't being a Local Officer, in my opinion it's coming very near to it. If we ever was to come to that in our Corps, we should want two or three Sergeant-Majors to look after it. But, for all that, I'd like to live to see such a thing,

and so would Sarah. As the song says : " Haste, happy day, the time I long to see!"

Anyway, I was remarking how well we were getting on ; when, in the midst of it all, Sarah, she says to me one night, as we came home from a rattling good meeting, " Sergeant-Major," she says, " Darkington No. I Corps is doing first-rate. I never saw it in such trim. Our Captain is a dear fellow—God bless him ! And our Soldiers are just beautiful in their love and fire. Didn't they go in to-night at 'The Pig and Whistle' ! It was like a little Pentecost. I fairly laughed again with joy. But, you mark me, the devil won't let this go on for long together without making a good try to upset it. This don't suit him, if it does you and me. He's looking out for a chance of making a raid on our ranks, you may depend upon it ! "

" Sarah," says I, " such remarks as those is a tempting of Providence; I don't understand them at all. They must come from unbelief."

" No," she says, " they don't come from unbelief, and it's not charitable of you, Sergeant-Major, to make such an observation. I never felt stronger in faith than I do to-night; but, if you live a little longer, you'll see what you'll see."

Now, I think sometimes that Sarah is a prophet. I says to her the other night : " Sarah," says I, " a

spirit must tell you these things." But she says : " Don't talk foolish, Sergeant-Major. It's no spirit—it's just my own common sense. Isn't it likely, if there is a devil—which I firmly believe there is—and if he hates to see people praying, and praising God, and getting sinners saved night after night, like that red-hot lot at Darkington No. I Hall are doing just now, then he must want to stop them, and will do it if he can.

" Why, wasn't it so with Adam and Eve in that beautiful Garden ? He could not bear to see them so happy, and hear them singing their songs, and praising God all day long, so he got up that horrid temptation that upset them. And he is the same hateful creature to-day as he was then ; and I expect that he's plotting some scheme this blessed moment, down in his black dwelling-place, to stop those mad Salvationists. But God is for them ! " And then she began to sing—

" Ask the Saviour to help you,
Comfort, strengthen, and bless you,
He is able to keep you,
He will carry you through."

Well, Sarah was right, and we did see something ; and this is how the trouble came about. One week-end, our Captain announced that he was going to hold a Memorial Service, on a particular Sunday night, for all the Soldiers who had gone

from Darkington to Heaven since No. I Corps was first established.

This announcement made quite a sensation in the town : for, you see, there were lots of people living round about who had never been inside the place, and lots more who had attended now and then, and lots more who had been Soldiers, but who were now backsliders. Many of these had relations and friends who had died when Soldiers with us, and they all wondered whatever the Captain was going to say about those people whom he had never seen, some of whom had been in the grave for years.

So when the night came, the Hall was gorged. Many people came quite long distances to be present. The Captain did well. His address was tender and faithful. He talked about the holy lives and happy deaths of the departed, took us into Heaven to see them, and then went straight for the consciences of the men and women before him who had a chance of living similar lives of usefulness, and following them to the skies.

The influence was powerful. The people felt it. Strong men and women cried all over the Hall, and a stirring After-Meeting was the result, with several old, dried-up backsliders at the mercy-seat.

But now for the trouble I talked about. You

will say I'm a long time getting at it. Well, you must have patience with me. You see, Sergeant Respectability, what keeps a shop and does the Band of Love, had brought Miss Highflyer, the daughter of her landlord, to hear the address; and out of curiosity, or because she was a bit impressed—which I certainly believe she was—they both stayed to the After-Meeting.

Now it happened that Sergeant Boozham, who was fishing down that side of the Hall on which the two were sitting, spied Miss Highflyer's head-gear, which stood up something like a seagull with both wings stretched out, a-preparing to fly, and, in his simplicity, thinking that this was a sign that she was a worldly woman, he spoke to her.

Now, although Boozham has been knocked about a good deal, he has a generous nature and a kindly manner, and I'm sure he would be quite gentle. But the young lady would have none of his arguments, and refused to answer him. This silence Boozham thought was a sign that she was convicted, and tried again. Whereupon Sergeant Respectability told Boozham to mind his own business, and leave her friend alone. Boozham said it was his business—his business was to get people saved; on which Miss Highflyer was very much put out, and cried for vexation, and the two jumped up and bounced off together.

As Miss Highflyer went out of the Hall, she told the Door-Sergeant that, after such rudeness, she had done with The Salvation Army for ever; and that when she had reported it to her father, she was quite sure that he would be done with it, too.

This matter of Miss Highflyer has made no little stir in the place. You would not have believed that such a trifling affair could have caused such a to-do. It appears that Highflyer's father has been very generous to the Corps in the past, as one of his nephews—a regular rake—had been converted on his death-bed through The Army. He has given something handsome ever since to Self-Denial, and every year has lent his grounds in the country for the Junior Excursion.

There was a great talk after the meeting on the Monday night on which the thing happened. Several of the people who never come of a week-night were there in the hope of a bit of gossip. Among others, Sergeant Respectability's husband had come in. He seldom or never puts his head inside our doors, and is opposed to his wife's coming; but she says she likes the children, and bears with her husband's opposition for their sake.

He was making quite a speech when Sarah

came in. "Only think," says he, "of such goings-on in a building that professes to be a respectable place of worship! Isn't it abominable," says he, "to allow a vulgar fellow like Boozham to speak to young ladies about such a sacred matter as religion! I'm disgusted."

"So am I," chimed in Sam Take-it-easy; "I don't approve of it at all. People don't come to our place to be bored with any subject."

"No," says Mary Worldliwise; "I always was opposed to ramming religion down people's throats. I shall have my name taken off the books if Boozham is not stopped talking to people in this way."

"And so shall I!" chimed in Bill Never-fret, and several more.

I was in the Census Meeting with the Captain, doing up the Report for the Divisional Officer, and balancing the Harvest Festival Account, when Sarah called me out, and said it was shameful how some of the people were a-goin' on. So out I went, and heard the last two or three speeches, and was just going to send them all home and recommend them to pray about it—which Sarah says is my "plaster for all wounds"—when the Captain, who had followed me, said, quite calm and kind like: "If you who are Soldiers will come to the Soldiers' Meeting to-morrow night, I will tell you what I

propose we should do with Sergeant Boozham and his fishing affair."

Tuesday night came round, and we had a full meeting, and no mistake. It is true that some were a little excited, but the Captain—bless him!—was as cool as a cucumber. We had a good song and a real lively time on our knees, and then the Captain got up and made a little speech. Says he: "Comrades, before we go on to read The General's Letter, I want to clear up a little matter that I hear is troubling one or two of you." Then he went on to speak of the scrimmage of the previous Sunday night; and, after mentioning what had occurred, he went on to say:—

"It appears," says he, "that Miss Highflyer went home, and told her father of the treatment she had received at the meeting, and this vexed him very much, and the first thing next morning he called at the Quarters to ask what I meant by allowing his daughter to be insulted after this rude fashion by this ignorant man."

When the Captain got to this part of his speech, Sergeant Respectability, Mary Worldliwise, Sam Take-it-easy, Jim Do-nothing, Bill Never-fret, and one or two more, got quite excited, and made a little shuffling noise with their feet. I thought they were going to break out into applause, while poor old Boozham hung his head.

"After Mr. Highflyer had said his say," the Captain went on, "and cooled down a little, I said to him: 'Mr. Highflyer, you believe in the Bible, don't you?'

"Believe in the Bible! What do you mean, Captain Faithful?" said he. "Of course I believe in the Bible. Am I not a Deacon of the High Corner Church? *Of course* I believe in the Bible."

"Very well," said I, "would you object to my reading you six verses from it? Only six verses, Deacon; that won't take us very long."

"Object? Not in the least," said the Deacon. "I shall be very glad to hear you read the Bible, because Squire Suspectum told me the other day that the Salvationists did not have any Bible in their places, or know anything about it."

"Well," said I, "please listen;" and then I read him the following out of the Bible:—

"And the men said unto Lot, Hast thou here any besides? son in law, and thy sons, and thy daughters, and whatsoever thou hast in the city, bring them out of this place:

"For we will destroy this place, because the cry of them is waxen great before the face of the Lord; and the Lord hath sent us to destroy it.

"And Lot went out, and spake unto his sons in law, which married his daughters, and said, Up, get you out of this place; for the Lord will

destroy this city. But he seemed as one that mocked unto his sons in law.

“ And when the morning arose, then the angels hastened Lot, saying, Arise, take thy wife, and thy two daughters, which are here; lest thou be consumed in the iniquity of the city.

“ And while he lingered, the men laid hold upon his hand, and upon the hand of his wife, and upon the hand of his two daughters; the Lord being merciful unto him: and they brought him forth, and set him without the city.

“ And it came to pass, when they had brought them forth abroad, that he said, Escape for thy life; look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the plain; escape to the mountain, lest thou be consumed.”

“ Then,” said the Captain, “ when I had read those verses, I closed the book, and I says: ‘ Deacon Highflyer, Sergeant Boozham thought your daughter was in Sodom. He knew it was a dreadfully dangerous place for anybody to be in, for he had once been there himself; and, moved by the Spirit of God, and with compassion for her soul, he tried, on this particular Sunday night, to persuade her to come out. Do you blame him? I don’t.’ And then the Deacon, who was evidently touched by the reading, said, with tears in his eyes: ‘ No, Captain, neither do I! ’

"Dear comrades, is there anyone here that blames him? If there is, let him speak out."

There was a dead silence.

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But the Captain had not done. He went on by saying: "Friends, that was yesterday. This morning, I have received a note from the Deacon, asking me to thank Sergeant Boozham for caring about the soul of his dear daughter, and saying that, after having had a little prayer and a little conversation with her, he feels he has good ground for believing that before very long she will thank him herself."

The Captain quietly added that the Deacon had enclosed a sovereign for the Harvest Festival.

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Neither Sergeant Respectability nor anyone else has said a word against fishing in our Corps since that night.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MAKING FAVOURITES.

WE got round the fishing trouble that I was telling you about in my last chapter most delightfully.

Indeed, it did us all good, and nobody benefited more by it than Sergeant Respectability herself. Since then she's gone in for uniform out-and-out; and, what's more curious still, she fishes in every meeting where there's any chance; and I firmly believe that she will get her husband saved before very long. He comes every night now, and, strange to say, his closest friend in the Corps is Boozham. He's never content unless he shakes hands with him before he leaves the Hall.

But the mention of Boozham reminds me of another trouble—a great deal bigger than the fishing affair. Indeed, it has been the biggest trial I have had since I've been Sergeant-Major at Darkington—so big that it nearly ended my term of office, which I think would end me: for I don't think as how as J could live happy without it.

How could I live and not be a Sergeant-Major of Darkington No. I Corps?—that's what I often asks myself; and yet I suppose I ought to be willing to give it up. I have now worn these blessed stripes for five long years, and they say that is contrary to rule. But the Divisional Officer, he don't raise any serious objections, which I think is on account of Sarah, whom he thinks is a model Sergeant-Major's wife, which I think so myself! And you see—good luck to me!—he can't part with me without losing her, although it is only fair to say that Sarah tells me that should the Divisional Officer see fit to give me a change it will be all right.

Now, I'll tell you how it was that I came so near to losing my post. It is a very humbling story for me to tell about myself, but I feel I must out with it. Well, you see, after that to-do with Deacon Highflyer's daughter, Boozham came very much to the front. For myself I took to him. I must confess that I had not taken very much notice of him before, but now I discovered that there was the making of a real useful fellow in him. So I gave him a fair chance and pushed him up to lay hold of it, which as Sarah says, is all that a-many of our Soldiers want to make them useful people. Specially is this the case, she says, with the women.

"Look," she says, "at Fat Sarah Jane, knocked about from pillar to post as she was once, a-living at one time or another in half the prisons of the country. Neither magistrates, nor policemen, nor parsons thought she was fit for anything but the grave, and now she's a real useful woman and no mistake, such as would be a credit to any Corps. Oh," Sarah says, "if they would only give the Sisters a chance, and make them take it, they would make something sit up!"

But what I was saying was that Boozham rose every day in my opinion. I liked him, and he had a liking for me, or seemed to have, which, perhaps, had something to do with my having such a liking for him. But, however that may be, we had lots of talk together, and I took him with me to the Outpost, and had him with me at all my Open-Airs, and he always was alongside me in the Prayer Meetings; in fact, I got to feel quite lost without him.

Well, things went on like this, and then the Captain had the misfortune to go down with the rheumatic fever. That is a dreadful thing, which I can never forget when I had it, how it made me cry out until you could hear me right across the street, and how Sarah just boiled me in hot sulphur water until the house fairly stank again. Though,

bless her ! she brought me round with it, and no mistake.

But the Captain's rheumatic fever " go " was a bad job, not only for him—God bless him ! for he's not strong—but for the whole Corps. However, he got better, praise the Lord ! and many thanks to the same sort of doctoring which Sarah gave me so hot and strong, and which she made his wife give him ; and then he had to go to the seaside to pick up the strength which he had lost.

A few of us went down to the station to see him off. He looked very pale and thin, poor fellow, and when I had helped him into his carriage, he says to me :—

" Sergeant-Major," says he, " I shall do the best I can to get better, and come back as soon as ever I can, and try and make up for lost time. The Lord has blessed us in the Corps, I think. Things seem to be in a pretty good way there, aren't they ? There's only one thing that I don't feel quite easy about, and you won't mind me speaking of it to you, will you ?—because I don't want to hurt your feelings, you see."

" Never mind my feelings, Captain," says I, " you can say what you like to me. Although I've lived a good few years the longest in the world, yet I feel as if you were a father to me. You can talk to me like one."

"Well, then," says he, "to be plain. Don't be having favourites while I'm away. I'm dead against favouritism. It'll wreck any concern; I don't care what it is."

"Captain," says I, "don't you never mind anything of the sort. I'm one with you there. I'm dead against favouritism myself. Sarah has put that into me strong, and you can make yourself quite easy on that score."

"Well," he says, "a hint's enough for a wise man like you, Sergeant-Major; but there's a little danger, I fear, of your going down that street, and there's more that sees it than me, and—"

I don't know what else he was a-going to say, for the guard blew his whistle, and we all fired a volley, and away the dear fellow went.

For ever so long I couldn't get what the Captain said out of my mind. I felt he was real serious about it, and I turned it over and over again. But I thought there was reason for his fears. I didn't tell Sarah what he said, because, you see, she had been saying something of the same sort herself, and it all seemed to be so unnecessary that I went on as if the Captain had been dumb on the question. I can see now that I was blind then. My conceit threw dust in my eyes.

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Well, things continued at the Corps much as usual, so far as my work went. I admired Boozham more and more. He seemed to do better and better. He improved in his language; he began to bring in some real fine words, and he got more courage. Indeed, he grew quite clever. I put him up to speak every Sunday night, and generally took him home after the meeting to have a bit of supper. In fact, to put it in a nutshell, I began to think that I and Boozham could do all the work and manage the Corps ourselves—always supposing, mind you, that the Captain came back again, and that the sooner the better.

But, somehow or other, things dropped with us. There was a falling off in the congregations, and in the Prayer Meetings. In the Open-Airs the Soldiers did not come up anything like what they did, and the crowds grew less and less. Then the collections went down, and as to the Knee-Drill, why, it looked as though it was going to come to Boozham and myself; and, worst of all, I could not help feeling that the spirit had gone very much out of the Soldiers—the happy, blazing, fire-away spirit which was so grand a little time ago.

Well, things went on in this way until they came to a head, and a pretty head it was. I never expected to live to hear what I've been forced to

hear this very night. The weather has been broiling hot all day, and I was awfully tired when I got home. You see, I am not so young as I was, and a hard day's work, with the thermometer at eighty in the shade, as the scientific people call it, has a different effect on you to what it had when you were a young man.

Well, this had been the night for making up the accounts at the Corps, and everything had dropped since the Captain went away, except the money, and I was broken-hearted. So when I got in, I was just about ready to give up the ghost. Sarah's eyes are like needles. She sees into you before you know where you are—at least she does into me.

"Sergeant-Major," she says, "what's the matter with you? You look real bad. Here, come along, you want something to eat." That is one of Sarah's weaknesses. When anybody is bad she always thinks it is the want of something to eat. "Here," she says, "come along, your supper is ready."

"No," says I, "it's not the food that's my difficulty. I cannot eat."

"Well," she says, "what is it?" And then I up and told her about the state of things; and, more than that, how I had come along with Jim Grumbleton, and how he had been telling me

that there was a general dissatisfaction among the Soldiers with the way I looked after the Corps, and that they would not stand it any longer, and talked about writing to the Divisional Officer if the Captain did not come back soon.

"Only think of this," I said ; "after all my toiling for them night and day in all weathers, and without getting a farthing for it ! Isn't it just enough to break anybody's heart ? And what it's about I cannot make out. If I only knew what it all meant, I should know what to do."

"Sergeant-Major," Sarah said, appearing a bit unconcerned, "your first duty is to eat. So come along and sit down here"—pointing to a chair at the table—"and have your supper, and I'll tell you how it has all come about."

So, to oblige her—bless her ! she's the best creature in the world !—I drew up to the table, and shaped myself for the business ; and she sat herself opposite me, and began a speech that soon made me forget my supper.

"Sergeant-Major," said she, starting right away, "we've been married all these years, and since the blessed night when we knelt side by side at the mercy-seat, there has never been anything serious between us ; but now I am going to tell you of something that is on my mind which I know won't be very agreeable, but which, painful

or not, I think you ought to know. If you are angry with me, it'll break my heart; but I must open my mind, come what may." And then she went on :—

"Sergeant-Major," she says, "I can tell you what it is that the Soldiers and the Locals of Darkington Corps are dissatisfied about." And here the tears came into her eyes, and she was so overcome that she could hardly speak.

"Sarah," says I, "there is nothing so much the matter as to make you take on like this. Leave the subject for to-night."

But she didn't take any notice of me, but just calmed herself and went on. "Sergeant-Major," she said, "it's quite true what you say. You did well for this Corps. I'm a witness to it. You spared neither pains, nor money, nor prayers, nor anything else you could give to it. In the dark days of long ago you stood by it like a man of God, as I know you are ; and now I believe—and, as your wife, I reckon I ought to know—that you would sooner die than do anything that you thought would injure Darkington. *And yet all these last two months you've been taking the life out of it.*"

"Sarah, Sarah!" I cried out; "you are stabbing me. Let me alone, Sarah."

"It hurts me more than it can hurt you, to

say these things," she said; "but they must be spoken. *Sergeant-Major, you've been destroying Darkington!* I've had my suspicions about it for a long time, but I've only had my eyes opened to the fact this afternoon, and I got it done by the bedside of that dear afflicted saint and Soldier, Mary Ann. The Bible says: 'The secrets of the Lord are with them that fear Him.' And the secrets of Darkington Corps are with that dear, suffering soul.

"Well," Sarah went on, "I called to see Mary to-day, as I do every Tuesday afternoon when I can; and after we had talked a little, she said to me in her own quiet way: 'Sarah,' says she, 'I want to have a few private words with you.' I said: 'All right, my dear, say on. I shall be glad to hear you.' And then she said: 'Sarah, your husband, the dear Sergeant-Major, is ruining our Corps, and he don't know it.' I says: 'In what way, Mary?' And she said: 'By making favourites.' And then I saw it all in a moment, Sergeant-Major—I saw it all!"

"Well," I said, "what else did she say?"

"Well, she said: 'There's Mrs. Sergeant Grumbleton; why, the Sergeant-Major has put her to the front before all the other women, ever since she came off what we thought was her dying bed.'

“ ‘ And then there’s Will Boozham. You know I cannot get off my bed, but I know all that goes on in the Corps. Every meeting is prayed over in this room beforehand, and I hear all about it directly after it’s been held. And they tell me that it is “ Boozham, pray,” and “ Boozham, lead the meetings,” and “ Boozham, make the announcements,” and “ Boozham, do the Open-Air,” until everybody is sick of Boozham, and the Soldiers say, “ Let Boozham do it all. There’s nobody now but Boozham.” ’ ”

“ But this is not all the damage that is being done,” says Sarah. (Here I fancy I laid my head upon the table, and fairly groaned again.) But Sarah went on :—

“ Well, Mary Ann said that Mrs. Boozham had been to see her in great trouble about her husband. She says Will is quite changed. She’s afraid of him leaving The Army. That Mr. Respectability has been filling him up with notions about his wonderful abilities, and how he could improve his position, or get to be a Town Missionary or something else that would make him better off, and enable him to do better for his family, if he was to join the High Corner Church.

“ Now, his wife is broken-hearted at the prospect of Will’s getting led off from the Corps, for

she says she does not know what might happen. 'Only think,' she says, 'if after all this he was to fall back again!' And she says that she thinks it is all because he's been made so much of since the Captain went away. She loves the Sergeant-Major very much; but she cannot help feeling sorry that he has made such a favourite of Will."

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Sarah says she got her eyes opened that afternoon. Surely the Lord opened my eyes that night, and on my knees I cried out to Him to show me what to do. I believe He showed me, before I slept, what was my duty; and before we went to bed that night, I had made up my mind what I would do. It was a painful task; but I saw it was the right thing, and Sarah strengthened my resolution to go through with it; cost me what it might.

The next morning brought a letter from the Captain. It was not a very long one. It simply said:—

"DEAR SERGEANT-MAJOR,—I am wonderfully better, and shall be, God willing, with you in time for the Soldiers' Meeting on Tuesday night. Get all my blessed comrades together. I hope to find you all united as one man, and full of courage and faith for a mighty campaign. Hallelujah!

"Your affectionate Captain,

"FAITHFUL.

"P.S.—Love to Sarah and the children."

That Soldiers' Meeting was the biggest that had been held in Darkington for many a year. No matter whether they were hot or cold, the Soldiers loved their Captain, and were right glad to see him again. He came straight from the train to the Hall, and I had no chance of having a talk with him before the meeting—which I very much wanted.

After the preliminaries had been gone through, he spoke a few words, saying how glad he was to get home again and see all our happy faces once more. Then I made a sign to him that I wanted to have a word, and got up and said : "Captain and comrades, I have a confession that I want to make before you all ; " and then my heart came up into my mouth, and there was an awkward bit of silence. Everybody looked at everybody else, as much as to say : " What's up with the Sergeant-Major ? "

But after a minute I got away again, and I says : " Captain, I have to confess to you that I have not been faithful to my office during your absence." (And there was more looking at each other by the Soldiers. But I felt the Lord helping me.) " I have not been fair to the Corps. I've had my favourites. I'm not worthy of being Sergeant-Major of Darkington No. I Corps, and so I place my resignation in your hands."

And here I broke down, and cried like a child; and what must Sarah do but get up and stand by my side, and stammer out: "Captain, I'm as much to blame as the Sergeant-Major."

Whereupon every blessed Soldier in the Corps got up, and, led by the Captain, declared that the meeting shouldn't go on till I had taken my resignation back, and promised I would stand to my post.

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Will Boozham is better than ever. He's not joined the High Corner Church, and it's not likely that there'll be any more favouritism at Darkington for some time to come. Oh! if I had only obeyed the Captain, told Sarah what he said in the train, and given everybody a chance!

Since then Sarah and I have been to see Mary Ann. We all praised the Lord together.

CHAPTER XIX.

BAND AND OTHER TROUBLES.

I DON'T know whether it's the coming home of our Captain—which Sarah says was sure to have a good effect—or what it is, but we've got the steam up again wonderfully quick, and I think Darkington Corps has reached about as high a point of prosperity as it has ever known.

Still, we're a long way from perfection—which Sarah says we always shall be in this world—anyhow, at Darkington No. I.

You see, there's one thing that's given us a great deal of trouble lately, one way or another, and that is the Band.

Now, I should be sorry to say anything that would be likely to reflect on our Band, for it is a fine institution, and no mistake! You see, most of them Bandsmen they toil just like slaves, they do. I know some of them have a hard job at their daily work, and they are at the Corps almost every week-night, and all day on a Sunday, when they march about and blow their instruments,

although they have mostly to be up and at work by six the next morning. It's no joke, I can tell you.

And then, there's the music—why, it's proper! Did you ever hear 'em talk about the Royal Horse Guards' Band? I don't believe they can come up to the Band of Darkington No. I. Why, many a time when I've been tired, and ready to give up my post for a younger man—which the Divisional Officer is always a-hinting at—that Band has carried me off to Heaven, and I've made up my mind to stick to my office whatever may happen, till I join in the music of the Celestial City.

But, after all, mind, we've had a lot of trouble with the Band, and I was going to tell you a little about 'em. In fact, it has never been right since Captain Please-em-all was here. God bless him! He had his good points, and I hope I don't forget to pray for him. But, then, he let things go very much as they liked; and did not trouble himself so long as the money came in fairly well, and the numbers were not very much down, and other things were middling. And so he left a peck of troubles for other folks to deal with after he was gone, and one of them had to do with the Band.

You see, Bandmaster Sound-it-fine is a very nice man. He and I get on well together, and I

believe he loves The Army with all his heart. And so he ought to do, for it did a good stroke for him and his missis and the children—and there is six or seven of them, bless 'em ! He was down low when Captain Drag-em-out found him, and now he has a fine berth up at the foundry, where he is a foreman, with good wages, and it's all come about through The Army.

The manager told me himself the other day : “ Do-your-best,” he says, “ we like your chaps, and I always set them on when I have a chance. You can trust them to keep on a-hammering when your back’s turned; and they are on hand when the hooter sounds on a Monday morning; and they do their week’s work like men, instead of a-soaking half of it away at ‘ The Pig and Whistle,’ while their families is a-starving.”

Yes, Sound-it-fine is a good fellow and a true Salvationist; and yet, to tell the truth, I must confess that he has his failings, and the principal one is that he worships the Band. *That's his idol.* I don't mean that he goes down on his knees and says his prayers to it; but I do mean that he makes far too much of it.

The fact is, he would like it to be the crack Band of the Division; and although I've never heard him say it, and I don't know anyone else that has, yet it's my opinion that he would like

the townsfolk to say : " It's all very well for people to run down The Salvation Army, but if they don't come up to the notion some folks have about taste, edication, and such things, they can make the best music in this part of the country." The fact of the matter is that the Bandmaster puts the Band before The Army.

Can I prove what I say, do you ask ? Well, I think I can. Take it in this way. He's got a boy, and a good boy he is. He's clever, and sharp, and good-natured, and converted, I really believe. A little while ago this boy's heart was set on being an Officer. His mother told Sarah so.

" Sarah," says she, " twelve months ago our Bob was just mad on being an Officer. He used to swallow ' The War Cry ' every week, and every spare moment he had was spent filling up his questions and reading the Bible; and all his talk by day, and his dreams by night, was about the Training Home, and what he should do when he was Captain of a Corps.

" But all that is changed," says she, " since he got on to the cornet. His father would have him go into the Band; and I do believe that it's not only robbed him of his desire to be an Officer, but it's cooled down his religion as well. He isn't half as anxious to get to the Open-Air as he was.

" His father declares that he never said a word to persuade him off going to the Training Home, and I believe him, for his father is a good man, as prays and reads his Bible regularly. But he doesn't want to part with Bob out of the Band." That's what the boy's mother said to Sarah, and she told me all about it when I got home the same night.

Then, there's another awkward thing as has happened with the Band, which has grieved Sarah very much, and I must confess I don't like it myself a bit; and that is, about Sam Boozham, which is Will Boozham's eldest boy.

You see, Sam was a promising lad and a great favourite with Sarah. He was only seventeen last birthday, and was the most likely Corps Cadet we had. The Captain was at a lot of trouble with him. Well, the Bandmaster persuaded him to join the Band. Sam did not want to go in himself, and his mother, she was down on it with all her might. But the Bandmaster told him that it would be all right, and that he would soon make a good player, and if he did go for an Officer afterwards, which he hoped he would, a knowledge of the cornet would be useful to him. So his mother gave way, and Sam joined the Band.

But, lo and behold! he had no sooner got enrolled than Jack Bangem, the drummer, who

was courting hard himself, got Sam engaged to his sister, what plays the second cornet.

Boozham's mother was real vexed about it, and so was Sarah. "Sergeant-Major," says she, "you see how it all comes about. The boy was shy enough, and did not want such things—he wanted a Captain's commission and not a wife—but it's all along with the Band and the force of example." For my part, I can hardly see how the Band's to blame for the like of that. But I suppose Sarah can see further than me.

Colonel Scour-the-land had been spending a special week-end at Darkington, seeking Candidates, and on the Monday night he had a meeting of Young People, and a real good meeting it was. If I'd been a young man, it would have taken hold of me, and no mistake, I can tell you; and if they'd had me then—which I think they would—I should have gone off sharp.

Well, the Colonel laid it down so clear, and straight, and interesting, as I don't think the Chief of the Staff—God bless him!—could do much better. They say he's a chip off the old block, although I've never seen him. I mean to do, if I have to go to London on purpose; for, from what I've heard, he is always a-moving about doing something for us Locals—and that pleases me!

Well, I was saying as how the Chief could not

have made a better talk than Scour-the-land did about our young people being Officers. And so strong did he put it in that six of our younger Bandsmen laid their heads together, and resolved to offer at once. But when they told the Bandmaster what they had made up their minds for, what should he do but go and persuade them off it !

Says he : " Look here, boys, it's all true what Colonel Scour-the-land says—every word of it. I agree with him down to the ground. I hope he will succeed. He ought to, and it'll please The General if he does, because I know he's set his heart on pushing this glorious War to the utmost; and he cannot do it without more Officers, as anybody can see.

" But," says he, " I don't think it will be wise for you to go. Look at the trouble I've been at with teaching you your instruments. See what progress you've made, what beautiful players you'll soon be, and see what a loss you'll be to our Band! Why, it will hardly be worth listening to if you desert it; and then, if you do go, I think you should postpone it until we get some one to take your places; and if you don't go, you can settle down in Darkington, and do an immense amount of good to the town and The Army. Think about it, but don't do anything rash."

They did think about it, and gave up all thoughts of being Candidates—at least, for a time.

“Sergeant-Major,” says Sarah to me at breakfast a day or two after the visit of Colonel Scour-the-land, “be sure and bring the Bandmaster in to have a bit of supper to-night. I want to have a crack with him about those Band lads.”

“All right,” says I; “I’ll bring him along.”

That night we found Sarah ready with her home-baked bread and a piece of good, sound cheese—none of your rotten stuff for Sarah. Then, she knew the Bandmaster liked a cup of good hot cocoa, so that was there as well. When we had talked a bit, Sarah opened up by saying :

“Bandmaster, you look well. That’s a nice new uniform you’ve got on. I hear you have moved into a bigger house, and all seems going well at home.”

“Yes,” said he, “things are doing nicely up there just now. Praise the Lord!”

“The Salvation Army has done something to help you on better for this world as well as the next,” she said.

“Yes, it has, and I hope I am thankful for it.”

“That Captain Drag-em-out, who got you saved, was a noble Officer, was he not? I hear

he's gone Home. They say he has killed himself with his efforts to save souls. He has left a widow and some little children, I understand."

"Yes, I've heard so. God help the widow!"

"Amen!" said Sarah. And then she went on: "You love The Army, and you would like to help it?"

"I love it; indeed I do, and want to help it with all my might."

"That's what you were made Bandmaster of Darkington Band for, wasn't it?"

He did not answer right off. So Sarah went on: "Yes, that's your business with that Band—not merely to make a Band as will please you, or please Darkington, but to make a Band as will help The General to bless and save the world—that means not only making good music, but making Bandsmen as will help him.

"Then," she says, "read this, Bandmaster," and she handed him a letter that she had just received from our Jack, who is doing his first Corps. "Read it up," said Sarah. "Bless the lad!—I like to hear what he has to say. He always writes sensibly." And the Bandmaster read as follows:—

"MY DEAR MOTHER,—I hope you are all well and praising God, which, I am thankful to say, is my experience, although things are rather hard this hot weather, being

without a Lieutenant as I am. But, then, you see, I am well and strong; but I do feel for some of my comrades who are in the same fix in this Division. There's Captain Weakness and Captain Shortbreath: they are both beautiful spirits, and, being young, they have not got hardened, and I am really afraid they'll be knocked out, and have to give up altogether, through not having anyone to help them—which, I hear, they have been promised ever since they were appointed. But I suppose the Commissioner can't send Lieutenants when he hasn't got them to send.

"Now, couldn't you see the Bandmaster, and ask him about his Bob and five or six more of those young chaps in our old Band, and get them sent off quick? They would make fine Officers. Tell him how short-handed we are, and ask him to have pity on us.

"P.S.—Tell the Bandmaster that I think I have a claim upon Bob, for it cost me a good many tears and a good deal of hard work to get him saved."

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"Sarah," says I, the next morning—for I was so touched that I left them going at it hammer and tongs, but all in good humour, for Sarah she was positively crying when Jack's letter was read—"Sarah," says I, "how did you finish last night with the Bandmaster?"

"How did we finish?" said she. "Why, there was no finish at all: we left off just where we began. You see, the Bandmaster he says he's all for God Almighty, and the Captain, and the

Corps, and the Training Home, and the Sergeant-Major, and every other blessed thing in the blessed Army. But first and last, and before all else, he is for the Darkington No. I Band!

"He says we must keep up the character of our Band for good music; and you can't do that without proper Bandsmen; and you can't make proper Bandsmen under so many years' practice; and when you have made good players you can't afford to lose them, or else you have got all your work to do over again. So, whatever other people do or don't do, or however The Army suffers for want of Officers, he's going to look after the Band."

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Here's an awful affair which has happened. You see, Bob, the Bandmaster's son, has got to feeling quite proud and independent lately, and something that his father said to him the other day did not please him; so what does he do but tear his uniform to pieces, in a dreadful passion, and go off and join the Town Band, which was mighty glad to have him, I can tell you. Then he hunted up his pipe—for he was a big smoker, before he was converted, for a lad—and now he can be seen blowing a cloud with the rest; while his father is frightened to death for fear that he should break his pledge, and go straight to ruin

with the drink and all the dreadful things the drink leads to.

His mother, poor thing, is distracted. She is terribly down on her husband, and says it's all his fault, as he did not let Bob go to the Training Home when he wanted to go.

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The Bandmaster's been to ask Sarah if she can't help him. He is in despair. He sees one thing in its true light now, anyway, and says the trouble is a punishment on him for not making soul-saving the first thing. He don't know what to do, and talks about giving up the Band altogether.

"I don't care now," said he, in great bitterness, "if it goes to smash altogether."

"No," said Sarah, "we don't want it to be smashed ; we want it to be consecrated, and the narrow, selfish spirit in it taken out and destroyed."

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And now here's another trouble come on. Mrs. Boozham has been telling Sarah about her boy Sam. (All the women folk come to Sarah for comfort and advice in their troubles.)

Well, here it is. To please his girl, Sam has made up his mind to leave The Army and join

the High Corner Church, where she went to Sunday-school; and nothing that either mother, father, or Captain can say will turn him aside. He's rather an obstinate lad, when he takes a thing in his head; and, you see, he's got quite cold since he gave up the thought of going to the Training Home, and got took up with this girl.

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They say troubles never come alone; and so it is; for there is another trial, which has been a great surprise for us all. The Captain has got orders to farewell. They say Headquarters is going to make a Staff Officer of him. Well, a man who has made such a good Field Officer is bound to make a good Divisional Officer, which I hope they'll make him, and send him back into these parts. (No disrespect to our Major, for, bless him! he is an excellent Officer.)

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Everything is arranged for the Captain's farewell. Everybody is awfully put out. The Soldiers are truly distressed, and the outsiders are sorry, indeed. It is not telling a story to say that everybody loved him—and so they ought, for he has worked hard for them.

Sarah is in dreadful trouble; she can neither

eat nor sleep without it. She thinks it's a real trial for Darkington. But to comfort her, I says : "Sarah," says I, "there's as good fish in the sea as has ever been caught, and although our Captain—God bless him!—is a wonderful good fish, there's many hundreds more good and faithful Officers who'll do their best for Darkington." But this little speech did not comfort her a bit.

The Captain is very sad himself. He says he has never been happier or more at home in any Corps before, and he's real grieved to go away. I believe he's no little sorry to leave the Sergeant-Major and the Locals—especially Sarah, God bless her! However, he's planning for a great farewell, and hopes to have a lot of souls. His eye is specially on the backsliders. Some that have been lost while he has been with us have been a great grief to him, and he would very much like to have them all back again before he says good-bye.

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The farewell is over, and it was a wonderful time. Everybody was broken up, and when the penitent-form was brought out there was a blessed smash.

Both Bob and Sam were there. One sat on one side of the Hall, and the other on the other. When the Bandmaster said good-bye to the

Captain, in the name of the Band, and promised that they would meet him in Heaven, he fairly broke down and sobbed right out. Bob could hold out no longer, but put his head on the seat before him, and wept, as well as his father—and we all did a bit of weeping as well.

A few minutes after, Bob rushed up the aisle. But before he could get down at the mercy-seat another young fellow flung his arm around him, and down they went side by side. It was Sam Boozham.

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Bob and Sam are both accepted for the Training Home this week, and the Bandmaster has written to the Commissioner to say that he is getting four more ready to follow, and that Headquarters can look upon his Band in the future as a Training School for the Training Home. He hopes to supply him with six Candidates per annum.

CHAPTER XX.

HOW THE GRUMBLETONS WERE SMASHED UP.

WELL, Captain Faithful is gone; and a real loss he is to us all, I can tell you. But we have had a lot of real good Officers at Darkington at different times, and at our little cottage we love them all. I fixes their photos up over the fireplace, and prays for them, and gets a letter from them every now and then, which is always welcome. And either Sarah or me, we writes to them, and cheers them up in their difficulties and troubles. Some who toiled hard for us are safe landed in Heaven, and one of my great joys, when I get Home, will be to see them again. Oh, my dear Lord !

“ What a meeting,
What a meeting that will be ! ”

Well, Captain Faithful did well for Darkington, and no mistake : Sarah says so, and she's a judge, if there is one in the town—bless her ! He had his trials, and he did not get overmuch patting on the back, either—which none of us do. I'm sure I don't ; but, then, I suppose it wouldn't

be good for any of us to have the praises of men. Anyway, Captain Faithful did not.

"Sergeant-Major," he says to me, when the Soldiers, and the friends, and the roughs, and a lot of poor people were shouting, and blessing him, and singing—

"God be with you till we meet again;
Keep love's banner floating o'er you;
Smite death's threatening wave before you—
God be with you till we meet again!"

Till we meet at Jesus' feet;
God be with you till we meet again—

"Sergeant-Major," he says, "'All's well that ends well.' This is a good finish. I am well paid for every struggle I've made, and every tear I've shed, and everything else I've done for Darkington. I'm the happiest man in the town!"

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I've had one or two letters from our old Captain, but I don't want to talk too much about Captain Faithful before I come to what I've got to say about Darkington, so I shall keep them for another day.

Well, we've got the new Captain, and I think we shall do better than ever. But, as our Sarah says, "The course of true love never did run smooth"; and we've been pretty close on to a big

trouble at the start, I can tell you. And this is how it happened.

At the Welcome Meeting, Captain Seek-the-lost—for that is our new Captain's name, and a good name it is ; almost as good a name as Captain Faithful was—God bless him !—well, Captain Seek-the-lost, as I was a-saying, was not in very good condition. He had a bad cold in his head, and his throat was wrong, and his voice was husky, and he didn't get on with his talking, and he tried at a solo, and that was a very poor do as well.

Then he said some things about sticking to the poor and the lost classes, which did not exactly please some of our croakers, for there is quite a little set of half-saved folks in our Corps who enjoy finding fault, especially with a new man or a new thing.

I think he thought we were a little too respectable. You see, while Captain Faithful was away, we painted the Hall up, and Sergeant Respectability got her hand on to the job, and made the place look rather gaudy. Then everybody had their Sunday best on ; and, altogether, I've no doubt we looked rather spick-and-span.

So when the Captain plumped it out that he was going after the poor, and the drunkards, and all the rest of that sort, some of the set who

reckon themselves superior to everybody else, thought he was making a kind of reflection, and that he didn't think as much of them as he ought.

Mrs. Sergeant Grumbleton was specially displeased, and said right out, while he was speaking, that she was sure she should never like this Captain—he could neither talk, nor pray, nor sing, nor appreciate a good Corps when he got one.

Sarah was sitting close by, and heard this speech, and she quietly said to her: "Sergeant Grumbleton, '*never*' is a very long time; perhaps you'll change your mind sooner than you think."

Now, I must confess that I was rather down myself, and I says to Sarah on the way home, "Sarah," says I, "I think things have been rather depressing to-night. I'm afraid our new Captain hasn't made a very good start. Oh, dear, we shall miss Captain Faithful!" And I was going on bemoaning the prospects in a general sort of way.

"Sergeant-Major," says Sarah, "you said, when the Captain was going away, that there was 'as good fish in the sea as ever came out of it.' You don't know what sort of a fish Darkington has caught this time. The poor fellow is sick. Give him a chance!"

The new Captain's first Sunday has come and gone. In the morning, he told us he had been out and about among the pubs and the sinners till midnight the previous evening. His heart had been stirred, and he was determined to make a desperate effort to do something for them, especially for the backsliders. He implored us to try and bring some poor lost creature with us to the night's meeting. Says he: "I've heard The General say that he would like to have a meeting, with a board outside, in big letters, saying: 'None but bad people admitted.' Now," he says, "couldn't each one of you bring some poor sinner with you to-night?"

Well, when the evening came, there was a big congregation, but they all seemed full of little more than curiosity. The Captain did his best, and, now his cold is better, his talk was not so bad. Still, the only result at the penitent-form was that wretched backslider, Sam Slip-down-easy, whom Sergeant Boozham had fetched right out of a public-house.

Now, the Captain was regular set up with this poor creature. If he had been the son of the manager of the Darkington and County Bank, Limited, he could not have made more fuss over him. But Mrs. Grumbleton, Mary Worldly-wise, Miss Highflyer, Harriett Top-knot, and their set,

who were all fixed up in front—really, their behaviour was not very becoming. Indeed, Mrs. Grumbleton said quite loud, so as Sarah heard her, “Who next?” says she. “Why, that dirty fellow has been down at the mercy-seat twenty times to my knowledge. It’s all calculated to bring the penitent-form into discredit. I’m shocked! And, then, only see how the Captain’s beside himself over such a sorry creature. I suppose it will all be in ‘The War Cry’ next week with a big heading—‘Captain Seek-the-lost at Darkington—another victory.’”

After the meeting, Sarah, she says to me: “Sergeant-Major, I’m going on first; I want to have a talk with Mrs. Grumbleton; she lives our way, you know.”

“All right, Sarah,” says I, “it’ll suit me first-rate—I want a word with Will Boozham about Sam Slip-down-easy. I don’t see why we shouldn’t help him to stand up strong. But he won’t, unless he gets a little assistance, until he’s well on his feet. I won’t be long behind you; thank God, the Captain’s all right!”

Sarah followed Mrs. Grumbleton sharp; and she says to her: “Sergeant! I just want a little talk. Leave your husband, and walk with me.” Then Sarah, she says: “Look here, Sergeant, I want to ask you a question.”

"All right," says she, "go on."

"Well," says Sarah, "I want to know whether you've ever committed a sin since we got you into the Kingdom on what you thought was your dying bed?—that's what I want to ask you!"

"Committed a sin?" says the Sergeant. "Of course I have."

"Well, did you confess it to God, and ask His forgiveness?"

"Yes," says she.

"Well," said Sarah, "have you committed another sin since then?"

"Sarah," says she, "what do you mean?"

"I just mean what I say," says Sarah. "Have you ever committed another sin since the first was forgiven?"

"Sarah," says she, "I am afraid I have committed hundreds."

"And have you confessed them to your Heavenly Father, and asked Him to forgive you?"

"Sarah," says she, "I have. I hope I have."

"Well," says Sarah, "now here you are, with all your knowledge, and a loving husband, and praying comrades, confessing to having sinned before God, and gone down before Him in private and sought His forgiveness hundreds of times,

and nobody condemns you. But here is this poor Slip-down-easy, whose mother I knew, and remember holding him, a baby, in my own arms. He falls, and falls, and falls again, twenty times. But he comes out twenty times, and says: 'I've sinned publicly, and I confess publicly. All you Soldiers of Christ, pity and pray for me, and help me!' And, instead of remembering your own weakness and sins, and welcoming and praying for grace to keep the poor fellow faithful, you sit and sneer at him as he kneels at his Saviour's feet seeking His forgiveness!"

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The Captain is going full steam ahead. We had a Saturday Night Mission to the drunks, and all sorts of lost creatures. Mrs. Grumbleton is thoroughly disgusted with it all, and has announced her intention to leave The Army and join the High Corner Church; but I don't think Jim, her husband, will go. Still, I'm not sure.

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Mrs. Grumbleton has not gone. Things have changed altogether; and this is how it happened.

You see, Mrs. Grumbleton has a mother-in-law who has been a great hindrance to her. She won't be saved. Captain Faithful tried hard to win her. Oh, how he prayed for her, and talked to her,

and I don't know what else. Sarah has done her best also, but the woman is so proud and haughty that she'll hardly stand a word from the likes of us poor people. In fact, all that's been done for her has been a dead failure ; and she is, I am sorry to say, as proud and as full of Satan as ever.

Now, Mother Grumbleton has a difficulty. As Captain Faithful used to say : " Everybody who knows anything about salvation, and won't have it, has a difficulty." Well, Mother Grumbleton's difficulty is the bitter animosity she has in her soul to her son-in-law, Tom Break-your-heart. She hates him because she thinks he has broken the heart of her daughter with neglect, and brought her to the verge of the grave with ill-treatment.

Oh, how she curses him in her secret soul ! She counts him her daughter's murderer, and almost every day of her life declares that he ought to be hanged. The last time I talked to her about him, she said she'd like to tie the rope herself !

Well, Tom is a bad 'un, certainly. He is only a young chap, and so clever at his trade, and yet, through the drink, and gambling, and evil companions, and other bad things, he has lost situation after situation, sold up home after home, and, but for her mother and brother Jim, the poor thing would have had to die of actual starvation, or finish up in the workhouse.

Now, Break-your-heart is no backslider. No, not a bit of it! He has never been saved, for it seems as if neither God nor man could get near enough to him for that. He laughed Captain Faithful to scorn when he wanted to help him, and says right out, on every invitation, he would go to — before he would enter a Salvation Hall. He's a wretched piece of business, I can tell you. I think even our Sarah has given him up. And that's a very bad sign!

Well, things went on after this fashion until, one day, the Captain announced that his topic for the next Sunday would be "*The Unpardonable Sin,*" at the same time inviting all the sinners in the neighbourhood to come and find out whether they'd committed the sin or no.

On the Saturday, somewhere about midnight, our Penitent-Form Sergeant rescued Break-your-heart out of the hands of the police by promising to take care of him. He was senselessly drunk, and had been fighting, and would have been locked up right away, and very likely got a month on Monday. The Sergeant, however, dissuaded the fellow, whom Tom had half killed, from prosecuting him, and took Tom home, let him sleep on the couch in his parlour, and watched him all the next day like a cat does a mouse.

After so much kindness, Tom couldn't very well refuse to go with the Sergeant to the Hall at night. But although they got him inside, no power could get him further up the building than a corner near the door, offering the opportunity for escape, supposing the fit came over him.

It was a remarkable meeting. The Captain was on his high horse. They had told him that Tom and other fellows of the same kidney were present, and after some testimonies, he went for them with all his might. His talk was a rough-and-ready affair, but it was hot and strong.

The line he took was something like this : that lying and drunkenness, swearing and cheating, and all uncleanness were wrong. That breaking the hearts of your loved ones, and cursing your own soul, and murdering the souls of those under your influence, was awfully wrong. That rejecting mercy and trampling on the blood of Jesus Christ was terribly, Oh, so terribly wrong ! Indeed, that all sin was bad and black and devilish—as bad, and as black, and as devilish as sin could be.

And then he went on with tremendous earnestness to say that refusing forgiveness for all that had gone before, *for the last time*, was the most serious offence of all, because it must be *the unforgivable sin*. And as none of them could tell

whether the offer of mercy he was making them there and then was not the last they would ever have, they might, if they refused it that night, commit the unpardonable sin.

Then came the invitation to those who would seize the chance God once more gave them; and first one, and then another, volunteered for the mercy-seat, and things soon became very lively.

Mother Grumbleton sat alongside her daughter-in-law on the front seat. The old lady's face was a picture. It revealed the strife that was going on in her heart between pride and conviction.

"What will she do?" more than one of us asked as we watched the outward signs of the inward struggle. She's a woman with a will. I reckon Sarah has a will; but, lor' bless you! Mother Grumbleton would have done for a judge.

But we were not kept long in suspense as to which way the victory would go, for up she jumped and fell at the mercy-seat with a piercing cry heard all through the building.

And then, while the whole meeting was powerfully moved, there could be seen walking up the aisle the wreck of what, not so long ago, had been a noble-looking man, meanly-dressed, with a face bleared and scarred with drink and passion and fighting, and all the rest of the ill-treatment the drunkard's poor body usually meets with.

Ashamed, and yet determined, Tom had left the corner seat where, hidden from view, he had slunk down, and, followed by the Sergeant—who had hardly ever had his eyes off him since he picked him up the night before—slowly crawled up through the crowd, and, in ignorance of everything else but the haunting memory of his wretched life, he fell down by the side of Mrs. Grumbleton, senior, his bitter mother-in-law.

Neither of them knew who it was that was seeking mercy by their side. Both entered into the liberty of God's children almost at the same moment, and rose rejoicing to their feet. Then, opening their eyes, they looked at each other in amazement for a second or two; and then Mother Grumbleton recognised the son-in-law she had wished was hung that very morning, and Tom recognised the mother-in-law whom he had cursed a thousand times because she hated him; and then they fell into each other's arms, and wept together, while the whole audience wept in sympathy. The quarrel of Mother Grumbleton and Tom Break-your-heart was ended, not only with each other, but with their Maker.

Mrs. Grumbleton, the daughter-in-law, sat looking on at the scene. She could contain herself no longer. Her difficulties about lowering the dignity of the mercy-seat, and ever so many other

feelings, fled away. With a broken heart she fell at the same penitent-form, and asked God to forgive her backslidings, and take away her conceited, fault-finding spirit; but she found no peace till she had sent for the Captain and received his forgiveness. There was much joy that night among the angels of God over the repentance of these Darkington sinners.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE JUNIORS.

I WANT to tell you that we've got everything going at high speed now in Darkington No. I. You would hardly believe the wonderful advances that's been made this last few weeks.

Captain Faithful's prayers and tears and personal talks, and all the rest of it, have brought forth a glorious harvest. It is just as I am always telling the Officers when they get downhearted. I always says at such times : "Captain, cheer up ! You've put in the seed, and if you don't reap the fruits of it all, another Captain will ! " And then they says : "Sergeant-Major, we like to reap the harvest of what we sow ourselves"—which it is perfectly natural that they should. Leastaways, I think so.

Well, I was saying that we are going ahead at Darkington. You see our new Captain, he seems to have struck another vein, as the colliers say, with his seeking out the roughest and worst; and it has been a very profitable vein, too, I can

tell you; not only because of the poor creatures that have been brought up out of the horrible pit, but because it has seemed to put new life into everybody and everything.

There is one thing, however, which our Divisional Officer is always worrying about, and where he will have it that we come very much short, and that is the Juniors. It is true we have a "Children's work," as they call it; but it is only a poor, bedraggled affair. It's been going a long time, but nobody pays much attention to it. The place where they hold their meetings is cramped, and dark, and dirty; the big picture bills on the walls about Moses crossing the Red Sea, and Daniel in the lions' den, and such like—which Deacon Propriety presented to us—are all covered with dust; some of them are actually hanging in pieces; while the Locals told off to look after the children, are—well, I won't say anything about them, or perhaps it might come to their ears and hurt their feelings, and that would be a pity.

Then the children are a forlorn lot, with one or two exceptions; the order in the meetings is wretched; and altogether the thing has such a poor name that the Soldiers, instead of sending their children, simply give it the cold shoulder, and go on with their meetings as if there was no such thing as a Junior work in the Corps at all.

You see, Captain Faithful was a wonderful man—God bless him!—but I must confess he did not care much for the children. Perhaps that is not a fair way of putting it, but his delight was more in an Open-Air Campaign, or a Sunday evening fight, or a struggle to get somebody saved at a demonstration, or to have a good Holiness Meeting, with everybody on their faces before God, than it was for going in for the young people.

Then, there's our present Captain—God bless him!—he's full of his Saturday nights' manuvers, and storming the factory gates, and fetching the backsliders out of the publics, and all that kind of thing; which doings, I say, is all right, excellent, first-rate. God forbid that I should ever speak a word against Officers who work day and night for souls! But, still, I must tell the truth; and that is, that neither of them ever worried themselves very much about the children.

Then there's Treasurer Hold-it-tight. He don't concern himself much about the Juniors. You see, he has no family of his own, and his wife makes no secret of not having any particular love for children.

And, to tell the truth—may God forgive me!—I've not been a great advocate of the Juniors myself; and Sarah, she never misses a chance of laying the law down to me about it.

"Sergeant-Major," she says, "where would your children have been, if they had not been looked after and shown the right way, and stirred up to walk in it, when they was young? You've not done much at them yourself, have you now? You've been so busy with the Seniors, and the Outposts, and the Open-Airs, and such like—which things ought to be seen to—of course they ought. But, then, you see, the children, Sergeant-Major, had the good fortune to have a mother who loved their souls, and who made up her mind that they should love God and be good Salvationists, whatever came. Now, what I want to know, Sergeant-Major, is this: Where would your children have been to-day, if they had not been cared for when they was young?

"Look at Tom Blaze-away's family—although he reckons he's a good Salvationist—which he is, as when he sings 'Death is coming and the Judgment Day' in the Open-Air, the people can hear him three streets off, and when he gets fairly a-goin' on his knees in the After-Meetings, the windows of the Hall fairly rattle again, and I fancy sometimes that the very foundations of the building tremble.

"But, there now, just look at his children! Don't they tear one another's clothes, and pull one another's hair, and make faces at their father,

and sauce their mother, and use bad language, and I don't know what else? What is to become of them if somebody don't look after them? That's what I want to know!

"It is true their mother, bless the timid little soul, ought to teach them and save them; but then, what does she know about saving and training children? Why, you remember as how as she was the daughter of that horrid drunkard, Ted Never-full, and they were married when she was only seventeen, and the children came fast, and Tom drank all he could lay his hands on for the first few years. Then they have only been converted a little while, and have everything to learn. But there are the bairns all the same; and, I ask you, what is to be done with them?"

Then, Sarah, she goes on: "Look at the children down the alley at the back of our house. What is to be done with them, Sergeant-Major, I want to know? You should look in there sometimes!"

"I've just been down to visit that poor, dying woman, whose husband was found lying in the gutter, helplessly drunk, on Saturday night, and took home by Will Boozham. As I stood in his room I had a look out of the window at a gang of youngsters in the court, who was talking to each other in a most confidential manner about what

they was going to be when they 'growed up,' as they called it. One little, half-naked rascal said he was going to be a thief; another, scratching his head in ever such a ferocious manner, was going to get drunk every night; another declared that he was going to be a soldier, and shoot the Boers; and so on, and on and on. Oh, it did make my blood curdle to see them in their rags and filth, with their mouths full of cursing and filthiness. I felt as if I was looking at little devils instead of human creatures. Sergeant-Major," says Sarah, "what is to become of these young plants, if nobody don't care for them ? "

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Sarah has just got a letter from our boy Jack, who, I told you, had got his first Corps at Flintville, and a hard shop the lad has found it. Sarah says that if she had the management of things, she would not send a lad on his first command to a place where things was so difficult.

But I says : "Sarah, it's all right ! It will all turn out for the best, and it'll be good for Jack; anyhow, in the long run." Well, as I was a-saying, Sarah has got a letter, and it has cheered her up not a little, and she declares she is going to read it to the Captain, to push him up to doing something more for the Juniors. And then she made me promise to speak of it, and said it

would be interesting. Perhaps there's a bit of mother's pride in this, but the letter really sounds very well. Here it is :—

"DEAR MOTHER,—I can't stop any longer from telling you the good news about our Corps. You know what a fight we've had; but, never mind, better days are coming on.

"And it's all been through three young girls, the daughters of a Staff Officer, who have gone in for a Band of Love. They've got some of the dirtiest and lowest children in the place together, and they've loved and amused and taught them, with an amazing lot of patience.

"For a while all seemed to be of no use, the children only got harder and harder; but then the break came, and some of the worst got saved.

"And now, to see those boys at the meetings, in the Hall and in the Open-Air, and hear them testify and pray, it is wonderful. It's cheered up our Soldiers, and they're working with a new heart. The mothers and fathers of these children are coming to the meetings. Some of them have got converted, and we've got a real new start, I do believe. Tell dad he's to get the Captain to run a Band of Love at Darkington I."

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Sarah had a good cry over that letter. I couldn't see for the life of me what there was in it to cry about. I should have thought it was real delightful to hear that Jack was in such good spirits, and that something was being done in that dark hole. But I suppose they were tears of

joy. Anyway, after that letter, she took on about the Juniors again in real earnest. In fact, she got what you might call the Junior fever. So much so, that it took away her appetite, and kept her from sleeping. So at last I says to her: "Well, Sarah, you'd better go and talk to the Captain yourself." "All right!" says she, "I must talk to somebody, or I shall be real ill about the business."

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Sarah has seen the Captain, and had a good go with him. She told me all about it after. She says he fairly cried when she told him about Tom Blaze-away's children, and the poor neglected little things down our alley. He said that he had been in India when he was in the king's army, and that the heathen children were not in so bad a case as the poor things she described to him, "But," said the Captain, "how can I go about forming a Band of Love?"

"Well," says Sarah, "there's Sergeant Never-tire. She's the soul of what little is done for the children in Darkington, and she's been telling me that they must have a bigger place. And the Sergeant says that there's an old warehouse close by the Hall that they can have for five shillings a week, and that it could be cleaned up and made quite grand for a few pounds; and that

if the Soldiers would only set to, they could do nearly all that wants doing at it themselves."

Well, the Captain, he promised Sarah to pray about it, and to bring it up at the next meeting of the Locals.

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We've had the Locals' Meeting, and I'm sorry to say that some rather hard things were said about the Junior scheme. You see, the Captain, he made a nice little speech, which, to tell the truth, was just about the same that Sarah had been saying to him, and then he proposed they should take up the children in earnest, and go for the warehouse that Sergeant Never-tire had recommended. He'd been to look at it, he said, and he thought it would do proper.

There was no response to the proposal, and I must confess that I didn't feel like saying anything myself, which vexed Sarah very much. She told me afterwards that I hadn't the heart of a chicken, or else I should have jumped up, and said : " Well done, Captain, that's it ! And there's my five shillings towards doing the place up."

After a little silence, however, Treasurer Hold-it-tight, he gets on his feet. I smelt mischief as soon as I see him shuffle off his seat !

" Captain Seek-the-lost," says he, " this is a good case you've made out for the children, I've

no doubt that many of 'em is in a very poor way, both for this world and the next. But who's responsible for them? Isn't it their fathers and mothers? What's fathers and mothers for, if it isn't to take care of their children, and have them taught and saved, and got ready for Heaven? If I had any children, which I haven't, I shouldn't want other folks to come and look after them—me and my wife would reckon that we had to do that work ourselves. The work of The Salvation Army, I reckon, is to go for the fathers and mothers, get them saved, and then let them take care of their children.

"Then, as to the warehouse, who's to pay the cost of doing it up, please? Why, there's our own Hall, doesn't that need painting, and don't the spouts want mending; and ain't there other things that want seeing to? And then, who's to pay the five shillings a week? Can you tell me, pray?

"And then," he went on, "if you fill this warehouse with children, where are the Company Sergeants to come from? That's what I want to know. Then, Captain, if you have all the Soldiers at work among the children, just ask yourself, where will the Open-Airs and the Pub-Boomers' and the Drunkards' Brigade be? And where will all the other work of the Corps be? I say, let us stick to what we've got in hand, and do that well.

We never was doing better than we are. Why not let well alone?"

The Treasurer had not got down on his seat before Sarah was on her feet. Her face was crimson, and her heart was full, and she talked—bless her!—as she can talk when her blood's up. I can't tell you what she said, nor nobody else can. I know she cried, and we all cried, and made the Captain promise to take the warehouse, and I promised my five shillings, and Boozham and Grumbleton and a lot more promised to help as well.

And then what should the Treasurer do but jump up and resign, saying that if such wild things as these was done, he could not be responsible for the Corps, and he would have no more to do with the money.

But the Captain, he says: "Treasurer Hold-it-tight, we cannot let you go out of office like this. You know I've not been a strong advocate for the Juniors myself, but I see now that we ought to do something extra, and we will do something, God helping us. But, Treasurer," says the Captain, "you must stay my time out, anyway; and if this thing does not turn out to your satisfaction, I'll write to the Divisional Officer, and you can give up your office then, and we'll go out together."

Now, things took a strange turn after this meeting, and this is how it happened. You see, Treasurer Hold-it-tight had a brother, Charley, who was the misery and disgrace of the family. It appeared as if the drink fiend had got possession of him altogether. I don't know how he got into this wretched plight—but he went from bad to worse, until he got about as far away as a man could get who is not actually dead and lost. His wife died of a broken heart. He lost situation after situation. Nobody would look at him. Hold-it-tight and his wife helped him all they could. They gave him food, and clothes, and money, and paid his rent to keep out the bailiffs again and again. They prayed with him, and advised him, and got the Captain to talk to him times without number; but it was all in vain, and at last they gave him up, and told him they would do no more. And this made him real mad, and set him on to hate his brother with all his heart.

He had three children. They lived in filth and wretchedness—if you can call it living at all—in an old hovel belonging to a farm-house at the very end of the town, in a field all by itself. Poor wretch! He was at the bottom of the ladder, and seemed but to want to go one step lower to be gone for ever.

Well now, it seems that just after we got into the warehouse, that Sergeant Never-tire, by some means or other, persuaded the eldest of this drunkard's children to come to the Band of Love—and directly afterwards they got her beautifully saved.

You see, she was a real nice child, about twelve years old, and what you might call regular good-looking. Sarah had just got a new bonnet and frock for Polly, so after she had mended the old ones up, she fixed Sally up in them, and when she was dressed in her uniform, she looked just like a little angel.

Well, little Sally no sooner got right herself than she set to work to get her father saved. She began by singing to him the songs she learned at the meetings. Her favourite was :—

“Oh, you must be a lover of the Lord,
Or you can't go to Heaven when you die.”

Then she used to pray for him, and cry over him, and talk about her mother in Heaven, and about Jesus dying for him on the cross. . But he only seemed to harden his heart and drink more and more.

One night, however, he let her bring him to the meeting. I don't know how it came about, but there it was. I think he was a little gone

with the drink, but he knew quite well what he was doing. My word ! wasn't everybody surprised to see him there ! Many of us knew that he had sworn a thousand times that he would never enter the doors while his brother Steve, the Treasurer, was alive.

When he came in he was a strange spectacle, I can tell you. His face had not been washed for many a day ; his hair was all matted with dirt ; all the clothes on him was a ragged shirt and a pair of old trousers, all patched and torn, while on his feet were two old boots, both belonging to the same foot.

As he got inside, he slunk down on a back seat close by the door with his dear little daughter, her face radiant with smiles, sitting by his side. I cannot describe that meeting. I believe every Soldier, and everybody else in the place that knew Charley was there, prayed for him that night. The converted old topers testified furiously. Everybody sang over and over again : "Oh, you must be a lover of the Lord"; and when the After-Meeting had got well on, the prettiest sight my eyes ever beheld in Darkington was to see little Sally lead her ragged, miserable, drunken father to the mercy-seat, and kneel by him, and pray that God would have mercy on his soul.

He was not there long before the Treasurer

was kneeling on the other side. Hold-it-tight may have done some crying before that night, but I had never seen him shed a tear. But his poor drunken brother, Charley, smashed up and groaning for mercy at the Saviour's feet, broke the Treasurer's heart, and he sobbed till you could hear him right over on the other side of the Hall.

Charley got properly saved; and when he and the Treasurer stood hand in hand, singing, "Praise God, I'm saved!" I don't think there was a dry eye in the place.

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The fastest friend the Juniors possess in Darkington to-day, the one who gives his money most freely, and works hardest and longest and most successfully for them, is Treasurer Hold-it-tight.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DRUNKARD AND HIS SALVATION.

WE have had our Local Officers' Meeting, but I can't say that it's been altogether satisfactory. There was plenty of us at it, so far as that goes, for nearly every Local in the Corps was there; but, somehow or other, there was a feeling about the meeting that I did not like a single bit.

Our Captain, he's "*a little gone*" on the public-house set, and that call of The General for the rescue of five thousand drunkards during the year has almost turned his head. So he had the subject up at the Local Officers' Meeting, and went into it in dead earnest; and when he had done, he said he would like to hear if we had any new plans to propose that would be likely to make it a success.

The speech was not, I must confess, received over grandly. The fact is, Publication-Sergeant Bookem had been talking against the scheme a little in the Corps, and there was a kind of a flat feeling about it. So when the Captain sat down,

nobody was a bit taken back when they saw Bookem get on to his feet, and begin with his objections.

"Well, Captain," says he, "you're a proper friend of these poor wretches what you've been talking about. I admit that it would be a good thing if they could be helped; but then, you see, so far as our Corps is concerned, I think we've about as much to do as we can manage, and I fancy that you can lay the work on us a little too thick. 'It's the last feather that breaks the camel's back,' they say, and ain't there a lot of pretty heavy feathers on our backs already?"

"Isn't there this new move among the Juniors? and don't you want to double 'The War Cry' sales? which, as I'm Publication-Sergeant, I can see would be a good thing. And then, there's the one hundred thousand souls that The General is always a-writin' about. And then, isn't there the Self-Denial, which is just due? and, well—I don't know what there is not; and now on the top of it all we have to go and get five thousand drunkards saved! It may be all right; perhaps it is; but, to me, it does seem rather unreasonable, if not impossible."

"Besides," he went on, "doesn't the Bible say, 'Charity begins at home'? and haven't we got a lot of unsaved people what's been coming to

this blessed Hall of ours for years and years gone by, and yet ain't got saved yet? And isn't there a swarm of backsliders about, and doesn't the place want painting, and aren't there ever so many other things? Captain," says he, "you're a good man; but it seems to me that we've got as much to do at Darkington as we can manage at present."

Well, after this, the Captain he gets up, and he makes a red-hot answer, which I can't remember what it was. All I can think of what he did say—and he banged the table enough to smash it while he said it—was that if they would not help him to rescue the twenty poor wretches who had been put down as our share, he would go and do it himself; and then he pitched off, "We'll be heroes," which did not seem to fit in with things at all, and the meeting broke up.

I got home that night a little sooner than usual, for I did not feel quite comfortable in my mind; and, as we sat over our bread and cheese, I could plainly see that Sarah was not right either. There was silence for a time, and then Sarah she broke out :—

"That was a fine speech your friend Bookem made to-night, wasn't it? And my husband, the Sergeant-Major, was a very brave man not to

have a word to say on behalf of his Captain and the poor drunkards, wasn't he? ”

I didn't say anything in reply, for, to tell the truth, I didn't know what to say. And then she asked me straight off : “ Don't you think so, Sergeant-Major ? ”

“ Well,” says I, “ come, Sarah, you must admit that there was something in what the Sergeant said. It's all very well to make speeches about saving the poor creatures ; but you can have too much of a good thing, can't you ? Besides, some of these 'drunks' that we are to go after are a real bad lot, aren't they ? ”

“ Yes, they are a bad lot, Sergeant-Major ; I admit they are,” said she. “ Don't I know it, Sergeant-Major, as was once a drunkard's wife, and who has the misfortune to have the same curse in my own family in other ways to-day ? Wasn't there my brother Charlie—the kindest, lovingest, cleverest of all my brothers ? Wasn't he my father's pride and my mother's joy ; and didn't the drink get hold of him, and drag him down so often and so low that, in a fit of despair, he went and hanged himself ? ”

“ And then, isn't there 'Uncle Ben,' as the children call him—your own brother, Sergeant-Major ? What about him ? But for the drink, would there be a better-hearted fellow walking

about Darkington to-day? I don't believe there would!

"Where is he now, Sergeant-Major?" she went on. "Where is he now? I ask you. He's in a prison cell for doing what he never would have done but for the drink and the betting and the bad company it led him into. And isn't his poor little wife a-dying? and aren't his children in rags and starvation? and aren't there hundreds more in this town to-day in the same case? It's the drink that's got them into this hell upon earth, I say—the hell what's in Darkington—and if you've forgotten what somebody did for you, and got tired of doing the same thing for somebody else, I'm going to help the Captain to fetch some of these poor wretches out of the devil's clutches, God helping me—which I believe He will!"

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They are going at the Drunkards' Campaign at the Corps most furiously. But I must say that, notwithstanding all Sarah's arguments and the Captain's speechifications, I think there's quite enough made of it. And then I don't see exactly how there's going to be much gain come to the Corps over it—and that's my chief business, you see.

Here's Uncle Ben come out of prison, and though Sarah wept oceans of tears over him, and

nursed his wife, and looked after his children while he was away, and got him a job in the garden of one of our masters when he came out, he's broke out afresh, and goes home drunk nearly every night of his life.

I wouldn't mind so much if he had any gratitude; but instead of being thankful, he's as surly as a hog, and refuses point-blank to come near the Hall, and swears and blasphemers shamefully if I talk to him about his wife or children, and specially if I say anything to him about his soul. Although he's my own brother—and it's hard to say it—I confess that I've given him up. I've got no hope left. I don't see what can be done for him, except the Government would shut him up in some island where he couldn't get the cursed drink—which it won't.

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They're still raging after the drunkards at the Corps like mad people; and Will Boozham—I beg his pardon, he's Sergeant Boozham now—well, the Sergeant is the maddest of the lot. But they haven't got much to show for all their going on as yet. I don't believe they've got one of the twenty the Corps has to get as its share of the boom. But Boozham says to me the other night, when I asked him about it, "Sergeant-Major," says he, "have patience with us. The same God

that saved you and me is going to do the work here." "All right, Sergeant," says I, "I'll wait, and we shall see."

A few nights after this talk, it appears that Boozham was out selling his "War Crys," when he came to "The Pig and Whistle," which is now kept by a brother of Publication-Sergeant Bookem, and that much to his annoyance. He thinks it's such a disgrace to the family to have a member of it doing such a disreputable business. Now, Will used to be a very good customer at this show; but since he got converted, and jacked up the drink, the landlord has never spoken to him once, and hates to see him near the place. I suppose that's his conscience that's working, or his mortification at having lost Boozham's brass —I'm not sure which.

Well, on this particular night, Will went in with his bundle of "War Crys," and with a cheery word, began offering them to the first man he came across. On the other side of the room was Dick Swillem, who had been drinking half the day. You see the effects of the liquor is different with some people to what it is with others; some it makes real kind, and some it makes quite religious like, and some it makes downright mad people.

Dick is one of the last sort, and when he's got a quart or two of beer in him, he's ready to fight his own shadow. At such times he has a special spite against Salvationists in general, and he's bitterest of all against Boozham. You see, Will was one of his former mates, and he's been heard to say, when he wasn't responsible for his words, that he wouldn't be surprised if he was the death of him some day.

Well, as soon as Dick saw Boozham come into the bar with his "War Crys," as I've said, he rushed at him, seized him by the scruff of the neck, and proceeded to pour the beer out of his pewter down his back, while the very landlord lifted up his hands, and cried, "Shame!"

But there was somebody else there that night besides Swillem, and that was Uncle Ben. And Ben couldn't stand this, but made straight for Dick, and knocked him clean over, shouting as he did it, "I've got a brother in this 'blank' concern; and blow me, for his sake, I won't see the 'blank' fools treated after this fashion!"

As for Boozham, well, he fell on his knees right off, and began to pour out a hot prayer, while the publican looked on behind the counter, half petrified. It must have been a strange scene, as Boozham's just been a-telling it me after the meeting to-night. But I don't think anything

particular will come of that. These drunks are such unaccountable people. You never know when you have them. However, the Captain and the Locals declare they shall get their twenty drunkards saved. I shall be glad to see them do it, and especially if Uncle Ben should be one of them.

It seems that the landlord of "The Pig and Whistle" was tremendously taken hold of by Boozham's prayer, and the martyr-like spirit that he displayed when Dick Swillem treated him so abominably. You see, he had known Boozham at a time when, with half such provocation as he had that night, he would have half killed Swillem; and now, instead of knocking him silly with the first blow, to see him simply get down on his knees, and begin to pray like a saint, was almost a miracle, and it had a mighty strange effect on him. He wanted no supper that night, I can tell you, but got off to bed as quickly as he could.

But the Spirit of God followed him to bed, and in his slumber he had a remarkable dream, which he told me afterwards. It was something like this.

He thought that while he was going about his daily business in the bar, serving his customers and the like, he heard the blast of a great trumpet.

It frightened him terribly. It was a louder and more piercing sound than anything he ever heard in his life before, and, rushing out of his place and looking up, he saw the Saviour sitting on His Throne in the clouds above his head, and by His side was the great Archangel with his trumpet in his hand, calling the poor sinners to come to the mercy-seat. All over the sky there were thousands and thousands of angels, while all around him on the earth were thousands and thousands of people all going up into the sky to seek salvation at the Saviour's feet. Oh, he said, he thought there was such a multitude as he had never seen in Darkington before!

Crowds of old people were hobbling along, as fast as they could go; and hundreds of young people were rushing up, afraid of being too late. There were some rich people in the crowd, but they were mostly poor, and amongst them he thought he saw many of his own customers, some of whom were dreadful drunkards ; and, what was most curious of all to him, he thought he saw some publicans weeping and wringing their hands, and wanting to be saved. And, as he wondered at the sight, he woke, and the dream was gone.

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On the Sunday that followed this row at "The Pig and Whistle" and the publican's dream, we

had a regular snowstorm in Darkington. I can remember it well, because it brought our congregations down at least one-half, and spoiled the collections terribly. However, it did not prevent something wonderful happening.

The landlord of "The Pig and Whistle" was not up and about very early that morning, and he had hardly finished his breakfast when singing was heard outside the house. The snow was falling fast, and a sharp wind was drifting it in clouds along the streets. But Boozham's Drunkards' Friend Brigade was at its post singing one of their favourite songs with all their might :—

"I've left the land of death and sin,
The road that many travel in;
And if you ask the reason why,
I'm going to seek a Home on high."

Now, this particular Brigade was made up of a lot of beauties, and no mistake, I can tell you. Most of them were well known to the landlord as he looked at them through the window. They were nearly all old topers, and each had a history of recklessness, blasphemy, and shame behind him. The story of their wild days was written in blotches and scars on most of their faces. But every man of them that morning had the peace of God in their hearts, and the resolution of heroes flashing in their eyes, as they sang and prayed and

testified, and invited all and sundry who would stand and listen to them in front of "The Pig and Whistle" in the driving snow, that morning.

"Buy me a 'Cry,'" the landlord shouted to the servant, as the song went over and over again. The servant bought him a paper, and as he unfolded it, and looked at the pictures, a pain struck him to the very heart, and he uttered a cry of amazement that quite startled the family, which was still sitting at the breakfast table. What was it? What's the matter now? It was the picture that had startled him. And what was that? Why, it was an exact reproduction of what the publican had seen in his dream the night before!

"Get me my hat and overcoat!"

"Where are you going," said his wife, "on a morning like this?"

"I am going with the Salvationists!"

"Going where?" said wife and children in the same breath.

"I am going to The Salvation Army Hall!"
And away he went.

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Now, as I have already said, that was Boozham's Brigade, and yet Boozham was not there. Where was he? Well, he, like the landlord of "The Pig and Whistle," had had a bad night!

Tossing to and fro on his bed, he could not help thinking about poor Dick Swillem, who had poured the beer down his back the night before, and spoiled his new tunic—for a time at least. You see, Will and Dick had played together as companions in the fields before they had drunk together as pals in the publics; and when he saw the plight to which Dick had brought himself, he could not help being sorry for him from the bottom of his heart. “What could he do for him?” was the question that kept coming up. He was determined to have another try to save his soul, and to make the trial that very morning, too. So he sent word to a Sergeant in his Brigade to do duty for him, saying he would meet them all at the Hall, and away he went to find Swillem.

Dick was amazed beyond measure that Boozham should come after him, after what had happened. It knocked him clean over at a stroke, and he had nothing to say for himself. And there was nothing he could do, either, but surrender unconditionally, and that at once. So he went down on his knees, and asked God to have mercy on him, while Boozham prayed, and then went off with him like a lamb to the Hall.

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Sarah's faith had never faltered since the Drunkards' Boom commenced. She had set her

heart on saving Uncle Ben, body and soul; and the more uproariously impudent and insulting he grew, the more patiently she plodded on.

" You'll have to come. I shall never give you up till you are in the fountain," she would say to him; and he would reply with a curse. " Not for me, Sarah, never fear. I'll go to Hell before I join them fools; so shut up and leave me alone."

On this particular morning Sarah fought her way through the blinding snowstorm to the poor garret where Ben lived. A few days before, she had found one of Jack's old jackets, and mended it up, thinking it would do for Ben's eldest boy to go to the Juniors in. So on this morning she went to take the jacket to the boy, and the boy to the Hall.

To her utter astonishment, however, on her arrival, she found Ben in quite a softened mood. Indeed, he looked as if he had been crying—which he had. What could it mean?

It was soon evident that the Spirit of God had been at work with him, and on questioning him a little, he told her all about his fight on behalf of Boozham the night before at "The Pig and Whistle," and how his heart had been moved and broken by Boozham's prayer. He then confessed right off to the wicked, sinful life he had been living so long, allowed her to pray with him;

and, most remarkable of all, kissed his sick wife, and went with Sarah to the Hall without any persuading.

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That was the most wonderful Sunday morning meeting of its kind ever held in Darkington Hall, I can tell you. On the same bench sat Publication-Sergeant Bookem with his brother, the landlord of "The Pig and Whistle"; there was Boozham, with the companion of his boyhood, Dick Swillem; and there was Sarah, Uncle Ben, and your humble servant, the Sergeant-Major. But the shiniest face of all on that bench was my blessed Sarah !

We all went to the mercy-seat together. I don't know who cried the most, but I do know that Publication-Sergeant Bookem got cured of his narrow selfishness, and that the Sergeant-Major got a fresh baptism of pity for the poor drunkards, to which class he once belonged; and that the landlord of "The Pig and Whistle" renounced the public-house business for ever; and that he and his two customers, Dick Swillem and Uncle Ben, got blessedly saved.

And as to Sarah, she is better, and more like her Lord and Master than ever in her compassion for poor sinners—whether they be drunkards or whatsoever else they may be.

CHAPTER XXIII.

NEW CONVERTS.

MAJOR NEVER-REST, our Divisional Officer, has been paying us another visit, and that to some purpose, I can tell you—which is usually the case. When he does come our way he's always finding out something that we've done as we ought not to have done, or something we've left undone which we ought to have done. He's like a bit of the Judgment Day going about. Still, I'm always glad to see him, bless him ! I believe he's a man of God, and he helps to keep us going in the way in which we ought to go.

This time the Major's been rummaging among our Corps statistics, and he says, as plain as plain can be, that he's ever so much disappointed with them—and, to tell the truth, I'm not a bit surprised about it, for I think myself that they are a long way behind what they ought to be.

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The Divisional Officer has had a meeting of us Locals, and made quite a speech about things. He began by praising us for having gone twenty per cent beyond our Self-Denial target, and said it was most creditable. I don't know whether he didn't say that the Provincial Commander was quite pleased about it. However, as that may be, he made us all feel not a little bit proud to think that we'd done so wonderfully well.

And then he went on to talk about the importance of increasing our Soldiers. "Soldiers," says he, "is the thing. Soldiers pays the rent, and does the Self-Denial, and buys 'The War Cry,' and bombards the public-houses, and prospers the Open-Airs, and gets the congregations, and finds the Candidates, and shakes the world."

After saying all this, and a lot more of the same kind, he began to tell us how disappointed he was about the number of Soldiers he found on the Roll. Says he: "I've been reading in 'The War Cry,' and hearing in your reports about such lots of souls you've been having at the penitent-form lately, that I expected you'd got at least fifty new Soldiers, and here I find there's only an advance of half a dozen or so. Now," he says, "that's made me feel real bad, because I've been boasting about this Corps up and down the Division, and saying to other Officers and

Soldiers : 'Look at Darkington ; see how that Corps has gone up ! Why don't you go and do Drunkards' Campaigns, and hunt up the sinners from door to door, and fill the mercy-seat, like Darkington's done ? ' And then, when I come along, so far as Soldiers goes, I find you just about where you were. This is a pity, I think. What have you to say about it ? '

Well, I can tell you we was all about dumb. I suppose the Divisional Officer had had it out with the Captain before the meeting, because he said nothing ; and as everybody else was silent, I got up, and talked a bit about the losses we'd suffered through the strike, and the Treasurer said all the Converts had not stood their ground—which we all knew ; and Grumbleton, he said he did not think these drunks and suchlike were worth going after, for they never lasted ; and then the Captain, he opens his mouth, and says we must do better in the future ; and then the Divisional Officer, he says : "Yes, you must" ; and then he prayed for the baptism of Fire ; and we all went in to the other meeting and had a real good time, a decent collection, and two at the mercy-seat. And we all tried to forget what the Divisional Officer had been saying, and went home as if nothing unpleasant had happened.

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Now Sarah, she was present at the Locals' Meeting, but she didn't say a single word. She's rather curious in such things at times. She don't talk like some people, whenever there's a chance—which I sometimes wish she would—but she goes on thinking all the same.

Well, as we sat over our bread and cheese that night, we was both silent, for after all I was not altogether easy about the Divisional Officer's speech, and I could see that Sarah was put out about something. So just to make a little friendly feeling, I says to Sarah, as I helped myself to another slice of Cheshire, "I think that's very useful instruction what The General's been giving to the Officers about bread and cheese being such nourishing and substantial food."

"Yes," says Sarah, "The General understands a good many things, I have no doubt, or he would not be where he is ; but I don't think he'd have been satisfied with the excuses you Locals made at the meeting to-night about not having more Soldiers to show for all the penitents that we've had at the mercy-seat this last quarter of a year."

"Well," says I, "I must confess that the reasons given by the lot of us weren't very grand and satisfactory ? "

"No, they was not," says Sarah; "they was

a long way from hitting the case off to me. But, then, I'm nobody, and being as I'm only a woman, I suppose I'm not expected to have opinions on such matters. It's you men folks who have the opinions, and that's the reason why you always do all the talking at the Locals' Meeting."

"Now, Sarah, that's not fair," says I. "You know I always like to hear you speak your mind. But, now, come along; what would you have said, if the Major had asked you for your opinion?"

"Well," said she, "I should have said that Sergeant Grumbleton, what reads history, was telling me the other day, how that the heathen Chinese people leaves their children to die in the streets without taking any care of them whatsoever, specially if they be girls.

"Now, I don't believe a word what Grumbleton says about it, because there's no mothers that would be so cruel, whatever the fathers might be, to do such things; but it does seem to me as how as that is just what you Locals do at Darkington Corps with the spiritual children that God gives you.

"Nay, in my opinion, you are worse than what Grumbleton says the poor Chinese are, for you leaves the boys as well as the girls to perish. You don't kill them—no; but you just leave them to take their chance, without doing anything for

them. If they do well, they do well; if they don't do well, they don't; and if they go back to their sins and the drink and the devil, back they go, and nobody weeps or worries or cares.

"Now, Sergeant-Major, I don't know how that sort of conduct may seem to you, but it seems very cruel and very foolish to me. If your wife had treated your children in that way when they were born, you would not have been rejoicing over being the father of a Salvation Captain and two Cadets as is both going to be Officers.

"Suppose, when our Jack first came into the world, I had said: 'Here, take this child—I don't much fancy the looks of him, and leave him in the coal-place in the back yard for a week or two, and then bring him back and let me see whether he seems likely to live and be a proper boy, and, if so, I'll nurse him and look after him!'—you know what would have been the consequence. But that's certainly very much the way Darkington Corps treats its spiritual children.

"There's Seth Gorgehem. Look at him, Sergeant-Major. Didn't we get him saved after his mother died? Didn't I go to that funeral, although nobody ever invited me? and didn't I persuade him to come to the Hall that night when his heart was tender?—for he loved his mother when he was sober, and when he wasn't sober he

loved nothing nor nobody but the cursed beer. Well, didn't I plead over him that night, and get him to the penitent-form? and didn't he swear he would never touch the drink again, but come regular to the meetings, and bring his wife with him? And didn't he come for two blessed weeks; and wasn't he changed; and his children, wasn't they all new creatures; and didn't his wife say as their home was Heaven below? And then, what happened? Why, you know as well as I do. He fell before his temptations, and went back to the drink again."

Now, here I ventured to say that, in my opinion, Gorgehem wasn't properly saved.

At which Sarah fired up, and says: "What do you say, Sergeant-Major? That he wasn't properly saved? How do you know that?" says she. "Who told you so? That's just your unbelief. And that's just one reason why you left him to his fate. No; I'll tell you what was wrong. It wasn't his conversion; it was the neglect of those who were responsible for looking after him, and that was the Local Officers of his Corps. They didn't do their duty, Sergeant-Major; and that's why he went to the bad.

"His own wife told me that no Salvationist ever darkened his door from the night he was saved to the night he came home drunk again. 'Oh,'



she said, with the tears in her swollen eyes, ‘my poor Seth. He was tempted awful, and as nobody ever came near, he got the notion into his head as how as he wasn’t respectable enough for them up at the Hall, and that they didn’t care for him; and at last he gave way to the drink again; and now he’s worse than ever.’ That was it, Sergeant-Major. Instead of saying he wasn’t converted, you should say that he was left to take care of himself; and that was what he wasn’t able to do.

“ But if he was not properly converted, Sergeant-Major, he wanted to be. He made a start, and a good start, too. Mrs. Shake-it-down used to say that eating is like scratching; you only wants to make a beginning, and then you goes along easily. Now, I says, that it is just so with religion. The main difficulty is getting a beginning. Seth made a start, and then he stuck, as thousands do, especially when they have such a difficult road to travel as he had, poor fellow; and what he wanted was a friendly shove to keep him a-going.

“ And when he got off the rails, as them trams often does when they come to the points, nobody tried and lifted and sweated and such-like to get him on again. And that’s the reason why he is stuck fast to-day by the wayside, or, rather, in the drink shop, with the devil in him.”

And then I says: "Sarah, was it not the Captain's duty to have seen after him?"

And Sarah, she says, back again: "And so he ought, Sergeant-Major, I know that; but it's not my business to tell the Captain what he ought to do. Perhaps he had something else on hand what took up his time. Some Captains is so busy getting people saved that they've no time to look after keeping them when they've got them. It's not my place to tell them what I think of that sort of work; but it is my business to talk to the Sergeant-Major of the Corps, and to his wife, for it's myself that I'm speaking to; and it's myself that's to blame for poor Seth, as well as you, Sergeant-Major."

"Well, what's to be done?" says I, for I was beginning to feel rather bad as Sarah went on.

"What's to be done, Sergeant-Major?" says Sarah. "What's to be done? Why, have proper Visitation-Sergeants; that's what should be done. And there's one thing I'm going to do, Sergeant-Major, which perhaps will astonish you a little—I'm going to offer to be a Visitation-Sergeant myself, if you can't get anyone better able to fill the post. So you had better see the Captain, and hear what he says about it, for I can rest no longer and see the people lost for want of being looked after.

"I've been a good nursing mother to your children, Sergeant-Major, although I say it as shouldn't; and now I'm made up to offer myself to be a nursing mother for the spiritual children of Darkington Corps. I've a great deal to do as it is, but God will give me strength for doing another duty; and if I can't do much myself, I can get some of my sisters in the Corps to help me. And when I get going, one of the first things I shall go for is to get poor Seth on to the rails again—which I'll do, or I'll know the reason why!"

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Now our Captain, he's a downright sensible fellow, you see, and when anybody brings any plan before him which seems likely to be useful, he plumps for it right away. That is, he don't see all sorts of difficulties in the way of doing a new thing, and argue against it till it drops out of sight, like Captain Timidheart used to do. And when I told him of Sarah's proposal to be a Visitation-Sergeant, he just went for it, and wondered how he could have been such a stupid fellow as not to have thought of putting her in the post before. And so did we all.

When the next Soldiers' Meeting came round, the Captain told us that he was going to make Sarah a Visitation-Sergeant; and then he asked

her to tell us what her thoughts were about the post, and what had led her to desire it.

On this, Sarah, she got up, and told us how long she had been fretting about the people who seemed to be lost because no one made it their duty to look after them; and how she had felt the call of the Spirit in her heart, urging her to go and seek the lost sheep; and how she could hold out no longer; and as no one asked her to undertake the work, she proposed for it herself. She said she was only a poor weak woman for such a great undertaking, and asked us to pray for her, and then she fairly broke down, and could say no more; and when she was finished there were tears on many cheeks besides hers; and I felt prouder of Sarah that night than ever I did before in all my life. God bless her!

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Well, Sarah's gone about her work in a regular business-like fashion, I can tell you. She began by looking out for some one to help her, and the first she fixed upon was Keziah Schooling. Now Keziah's a bit educated, you see. She was a teacher at the Board School for some time, but her health failed, and she had to go to dressmaking. She's rather clever-like—she's made three or four songs that have been in "The War Cry," and she sends reports of the Drunkards' Campaigns on

Saturday nights, which we all carefully read; and then she writes letters for people. She's a dear, good-hearted girl, and loves souls, and wants to work for them. She's been a Salvationist some time; but, you see, she's rather timid; and nobody's ever asked her to do anything before.

Well, Sarah spotted her, and told her she wanted somebody to help her to write, and such-like. "All right, Sarah," said Keziah; "that's just the sort of work I shall enjoy, especially as it's looking after people who wants cheering up a bit. I've lots of time, because, you see, at my dress-making, if I don't get my work done in the daytime, I can have an extra cup of tea, and sit up a bit into the night and finish it."

Then there's Mrs. Boozham. She came round to Sarah after she gave her testimony at the Soldiers' Meeting, and kissed her, and said: "Sarah, you must let me have a hand in this job. I owe a lot to the Lord and this Corps for what He's done for my Bill and the family. Perhaps I can do a bit to pay off the score in this way."

Well, these three, they started off strong, praying and talking and laying their heads together how this work was to be done. First, they got from the Secretary a list of the names and addresses of all the Soldiers who had backslidden from the Corps for the last three years,

and then they got another list from the Recruiting-Sergeant of all the people who have been to the penitent-form for the last six months what hadn't become Soldiers. And then they went to work to get to know all they could about these lost sheep, as they called the people on their lists. Bless the dear women; I feel certain something will come out of their doings, and so does everybody else that knows Sarah, and they expect it just because she's so terrible earnest about it.

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The first thing that has happened is that Seth Gorgehem is back again, and everybody is delighted about it. He is such a good-natured, generous sort of a chap, that nobody can help liking him, and if he hadn't been such a random spendthrift, everybody knows that he might have filled a good position in society by this time.

Then, he has a good old father, who's got one foot in the grave, and who was breaking his heart over his prodigal boy, and the dear white-headed old man, he's just beside himself for joy.

"Sergeant-Major," says Sarah, the day after Seth got right, and made everybody feel it was so, "Sergeant-Major," said she, "I'm going to 'mother' Seth. His mother was a good woman, but she's gone, and I'm going to take her place."

"But hasn't Seth a wife, Sarah?" says I;

"and is it not her place to look after her husband?"

"Of course he's got a wife, Sergeant-Major, and, of course, it's her duty to look after him; but, poor thing, she's a weak little creature, however good-intentioned she may be. I hope she is saved all right; but, then, she hasn't got much backbone in her, you see, and it will take her all her time to hold herself and the little children together. But Seth is too strong for her, and I'm going to make him stand firm at all costs. I'm going to fight the devil and the landlord of 'The Pig and Whistle' for his soul, and his old companions into the bargain, and Keziah's going to help me. God's on our side, and we'll see who wins."

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But how did Seth's restoration come about? Well, I'll tell you. You see, Sarah and Keziah, they laid a little plot for him. One Saturday afternoon, they waited for him at the factory gates where he works, and when he came out with his wages in his pocket, they pounced down upon him with an invitation to "Just come down and have a cup of tea at our house," saying that his wife was there already. Of course, he didn't want to come; said he had promised to go with a mate to a football match that was on; that he was not

washed; that he had to meet somebody at "The Pig and Whistle," and some other things. But Sarah stuck to him. "Come," says she, "and just have a cup of tea, and then you can go where you like."

At last he consented. The fact is, he couldn't get away from them, and they took him off. You can guess the rest. They had everything ready, and before the tea was well swallowed, they were on their knees. He broke down, gave in, and whether he was properly saved or not before, there was no doubt about it this time.

He came to the meeting at night, and, with a shining face, gave his testimony. "That little woman," said he, pointing to Sarah, "says she's going to be a mother to me, and I'm going to be a son to her; and, best of all, God is going to be my Father, and you are all going to be my comrades, and by and by we're all going to meet together in Heaven. My dear old mother is already there, and I hope she has got the tidings that Seth has found his way to the Saviour once more, and is coming on to see her again."

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"Sarah," says I, that night, "you're a clever little woman. You've done a good thing this time. Seth coming back as he did made me happier than three new Converts would have done."

"All right," says Sarah, "we'll have some more of the runaways before we're much older; but you must go on seeking the new ones as well. This thing we will do, and the other we must not leave undone."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE DRUNKARDS' FRIEND BRIGADE AT WORK.

THE Drunkards' Friend Campaign goes on real grand at Darkington No. I Corps, I can tell you.

Things are happening every week that are more interesting than them novels which Jack used to lie in bed and read on a Sunday morning before he was converted. It's the wonder of the place, and I've no doubt a lot of good is being done. Sarah is mighty took up with it, and talks about it morning, noon, and night.

I was rather opposed to it myself at first, I must confess. But, you see, I'm not so quick at taking on with new things as I used to be. Sarah says sometimes, when she gets a bit warm with me, as how I'm an old Tory, and ought to go to the House of Lords, whatever that may mean. But then, you see, the good old Book says that somebody must stand by the old paths, and I think as that may be my duty, or, at least, a part of it.

Well, there's no mistake about it, we've got a black corner of Darkest England down our way—

a drunken corner you might call it. A man has been writing a book, they tell me, to show that three-quarters of the poverty and misery at Darkington comes through the drink-curse, and I don't think that he's very far wrong.

Then, you see, everybody's been arguing for years that something ought to be done. When the Bishop came along to that great banquet which they had when they finished repairing the big church, he said so, although they was drinking health to the King and prosperity to the Church in the fiery liquid at the same time.

Then the Judge said so. When he came to try the prisoners, says he : " If it wasn't for drinking there would be very few murders or crimes of any sort." Then there's the magistrates and everybody ; they've been saying ever since I could remember that there ought to be something done.

Well, there's been a good deal done, but we've got an extra move on just now, and this is how it came about. You see, Sarah, she not only buys a " War Cry " for the good of the cause, but she reads it. I really believe it is a part of her religion to read the blessed paper from beginning to end every week of her life. She starts off with the front page, and just goes through to the finish —advertisements, songs, and everything else there is in it. And, I can tell you, she gives me the

benefit of all she finds there which she reckons is good for me.

Well, she was so taken hold of by the account of the Drunkards' Campaign Meeting that was held in Exeter Hall, and what she heard was being done on those lines by Captain Fresh-method, at Brewery Town, that she was fired up with the desire to see something of the same kind at Darkington.

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"Sergeant-Major," said Sarah, as we sat over our bread and cheese the week after the Exeter Hall meeting, "that's a good 'War Cry' this week."

"Yes," I says, "I hope it is, although I've not had time to look at it yet!"

Said she: "I want to read you The General's speech on 'Saving the Drunkards.'"

"Very good," said I, "I'll be glad to hear it, but not to-night. I'm very tired, and I want to get to sleep a little sooner than usual, as I have to be up extra early in the morning."

"No!" said she, "there's nothing like the present time, and you must hear it this very night. It's gone into *me*, and I mean it to go into *you*." Whereupon she brought out the paper, and read me not only the speech, but all about the meeting, as hard as ever she could peilt; and then, without

stopping to fetch her breath, she said: "What are you going to do, Sergeant-Major? If there's a spot under the sun where the Drunkards' Friend Campaign is wanted, it is this Darkington. What are you going to do?"

If what Sarah had read to me had not made me resolve to do something, the manner in which she turned upon me would have driven me up to it, and I promised there and then that something should be done.

When I got hold of the Captain I found that he had been feeling very much like Sarah on the subject, and was one with her in the desire to take action at once. He had been doing something in this direction already, but we agreed to have a Soldiers' Meeting, and to go in for a regular Corps Campaign.

The Soldiers took the matter up wholesale, bless 'em! as they always do when they're got at in the right manner, and twenty-five volunteered to go out on the first engagement of the Late Saturday Night Campaign, and to visit or do whatever they was asked. It was just delightful to see how the thing took hold of them, and to hear them cry to God for His blessing on the work. After that meeting I felt sure we should see

something come to pass out of the usual. Sarah was in high spirits; as she always is when she gets her own way on a good scheme.

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We started well, and that was a good thing. A successful beginning is often half the battle. You see the Captain, he wrote to all the Officers he could find who had done anything of the sort, and got information as to how they had gone about it, and what measures they had found to succeed the best. "Because," said he, "by this plan we can profit by the mistakes of those who have tried at the same thing, and learn from their successes." He's a knowing customer, is our Captain. Bless him! I'm proud of him.

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On the Saturday night we commenced operations. We met together at the Hall for a little prayer after the regular service, and away we went. The sisters were instructed to deal specially with the women, while the brothers went for the men.

First, we held a short Open-Air opposite "The Pig and Whistle." Then we visited every public-house with our "War Crys," talking and praying as we had opportunity, tackling some inside who were intoxicated, and waiting for others till closing time came. Some of these we took home, and others we piloted to the Hall. The sisters brought

in one or two poor women, who were clean gone with the maddening stuff, neither knowing who they were, nor where they were.

That was a meeting, I can tell you. I don't know what the people who are all for decency and order would have said of it. But it was all order and decency to us, and no mistake.

There was not much done beside the personal that night. Nobody there was in a condition to quietly listen to speeches of any sort. But, nevertheless, we had some hot talking, and hot singing, and hot praying, and plenty of hot coffee; and altogether it was a hot time.

Then there was the conducting of our visitors to their homes, which was no easy task, calling next morning to inquire after their health, talking to their wives, pitying their children, and the general hunting of them up during the coming week, which was a most important part of our task. Taking it all in all, I can tell you we soon found out that it was no easy business we had put our hand to.

However, we caught some good fish that night. For one, there was Dan Smashaway. Dan was a strange, reckless character, who neither feared God nor the devil. He had broken the heart of one loving wife, and found another kind-souled creature fool enough to take her place. "He

promised me so strong that he would reform," she said, "that I couldn't refuse him." So she linked her fate with his at a drunken wedding, and repented with tears of bitterness ever after.

After his second marriage he was worse than ever. Situation after situation was lost; every relative and friend in the world tired out; every rag of clothing pawned, and every stick of furniture sold or smashed. There he was, shivering in rags, with his skeleton of a wife, and his children hovering between starvation and the Union.

How they lived, how they kept a roof over their heads, and how the children were kept out of the grave, was a puzzle to everybody who knew anything about them. But how Dan got the drink for his daily consumption was a greater puzzle still. But there was the family, deep sunk in loathsome filth and hopeless wretchedness, and there was Dan boozed and fuddled all the week round, while he could be seen drunk as a lord about ten o'clock, or before that time, every Saturday night of his life.

Well, we picked Dan up that Saturday night, took him to the Hall, and landed him in the dark, damp cellar he called "home" about two o'clock on the Sunday morning, with a strange and softened longing in his heart for a different, a better, a happier life.

Perhaps it was the coffee that did it, for you may rely upon it Sarah gave it him hot and strong; or perhaps it was the tears that some of the tender-hearted sisters shed over him. Perhaps it was thoughts of his mother, whom, drunk as he was, he persisted in saying was pleading for him in her chamber that very hour, and that his being there was all on account of her prayers. Perhaps it was the strivings of the Spirit of God. Perhaps it was a little of each, all mixed up together; anyway, an impression was made that night on the stupefied sodden conscience of poor drunken, hopeless Dan that never wore away.

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Other Saturday nights of a similar character, and other doings of the same kind followed, and Sarah began to talk of getting every "drunk" in the place out of the clutches of the publicans and the devil, when opposition to our methods unexpectedly rose up in different quarters.

Some of the respectable people in the place didn't approve of our goings on. They said holding Open-Air services at such unearthly hours and in such low and disgusting places was endangering the peace of the town. They didn't mind the poor wretches pauperising their families, poisoning their bodies, and damning their souls with oaths and abominations enough to make the

heavens shudder in such neighbourhoods; but when it came to rescuing them with songs and prayers and earnest warnings, the sense of their respectability was touched, and they started off crying out that the honour of their town was being endangered.

Now, the Mayor of Darkington this year happens to be a butcher, and Sarah has bought her Sunday dinner at his establishment for several years gone by; and being, as he is, religious, and a sort of lay preacher, and knows as Sarah is a Salvationist, he likes to have a little talk with her now and then, specially when there's nobody about. The other day he called her into his little parlour, and began in high tones to complain about our goings on in this new Campaign.

But Sarah, she was ready for him, and she says: "Well, Mr. Mayor, we did not manufacture these poor wretches. They was there before we began, and you'll admit something should be done for them. Perhaps our way of dealing with them is not quite as agreeable to you respectable people as it might be; but how can we do better?

"What do you do for them, Mr. Mayor?" she says, "with all the Aldermen and Councillors and all the officials, and the money you have to back you up?

" When Dan Smashaway and such characters is broght up before you ever so many times over, what do you do to help him ?

" When the policeman drags him along the streets, he says : ' I hope they'll give it him hot ' ; when he is brought up before the Bench the magistrates—and your Worship among them—say ditto ; and when he gets to the prison, the Governor and the Warders they say pretty much the same. You see, they all say : ' Punish him ' ; but nobody says : ' Save him . '

" Well, we're trying to save Dan, and some of his pals into the bargain ; and, Mr. Mayor, the least your Worship and the Town Council can do is to wish us good luck, pray for us, and pay for the coffee."

Then the clergyman called to see Sarah the other day, and he got talking about the Campaign, and he says : " Mrs. Do-your-best, I think your husband and those who are acting with him are quite mistaken in their erratic proceedings. I think those meetings, attended by people in a state of intoxication, with their mouths full of bad language, are calculated to lower religion in the estimation of all decent church-going people, and to cause it to be despised even by the poor creatures whom your misguided efforts are intended to benefit."

"Indeed, sir," says Sarah, "I don't think anything could make these poor slaves of drink despise the religion of Jesus Christ more than to see those who profess to be its representatives pass them by, and leave them to perish in their wretchedness and sin without stretching out a hand to help them."

Then some Soldiers in our own ranks, I'm sorry to say, not only disapprove our plan, but are saying things against it.

For one, there's Sergeant Respectability; he's down upon us tooth and nail. Of course, he don't say anything against it in public—thank God, he has no chance; but he just chunters and tittle-tattles to anybody who will listen to him.

Would you like to know what he says? Well, it don't amount to much; but he says the Saturday Night Meetings they makes the Hall dirty, and causes unpleasant smells, and that creeping things have been seen, and that it is lowering the Hall in the opinion of the Churches, and other things that aren't of no importance.

Then he says that some of the young people have heard bad language in the streets, and that Sergeant Eversick caught cold by being out so late the other night.

But when they said that to me, I says back

sharp: "What, would you have the Fire Brigade give up trying to put out the fires, or pulling people out of the burning buildings because a fireman got hurt in the discharge of his duty now and then?

"No, you would not, not one of you; and neither will the Local Officers and Soldiers of Darkington Corps give up trying to extinguish the fires of sin, or turn aside from their duty of pulling the poor sinners out of the hellish flames, because one or two of them get a little damaged in discharging their duty."

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Well, praise the Lord! if a few people have been down on us, we have had plenty to encourage us to go ahead. Oh, God is good! I do see now, clearer than ever, that if you want to win, you must fight; and that the deeper you plunge into the enemies' ranks, and the more desperate and determined and self-sacrificing the fighting is, the more glorious will the victories be.

The Captain's been telling us to-night that Deacon Propriety, of the High Corner Church, came in to see him yesterday morning to implore him to persevere. "Oh," he said, "the work must be done, the poor creatures must have a chance, and you see we are far too respectable up at our place to do it; and then we shouldn't know

how to do it, if we tried. You are the people, and if you want any financial help to push it forwards, apply to me. I have a trifle in hand now."

Then the Deacon went on to say : " There's Jack Nevercare, a young fellow whom I have known from a child; he was the son of an old schoolfellow of mine, long since dead. Well, Jack went to the devil early and altogether. He always gave me a wide berth, except on one occasion, and then he borrowed £5—to get him some clothes, he said, to fit him for a situation ; but he neither got the clothes nor the situation, but simply swallowed the money. Well, Jack has been into our office to say that you people have picked him up, and he's got a good berth, and is going to pay me the £5 at the rate of a sovereign a month, and paid me the first instalment on the spot. So I said : ' All right, Jack.' And, as I should never have seen the money but for you, I reckon it belongs to you, and I'm going to pay it into your funds. So I might as well pay it now."

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The Captain has made a fine hit, I think. We have had the most wonderful Salvation Army procession Darkington has ever seen ; at least, that is my opinion. Sarah, I cannot help thinking, has had a hand in this ; anyway, she has had no end of conferences with the Captain on the subject,

and the result has made a great impression on the town.

I wish I could describe this procession. It was announced that at three o'clock on a particular Sunday afternoon, a number of converted drunkards, with their wives and children, would parade through the principal streets, with music and banners and song, hold a meeting in the market-place, and finish up in our Hall.

There didn't seem neither to Sarah nor me anything very wonderful in this announcement, because it was only what was being done all over the world almost every Sunday of our lives; but it tickled the curiosity of Darkington and the country for miles round, I can tell you, and the people came in by thousands to see the parade.

Now, how can I describe that procession? I would like very muchr to do so, but I ain't scholar enough to do it. But I must try.

Well, the Captain he fixed his Soldiers first, and then he had the Band, and then came the heroes of the hour—that is, the converted “drunks.” Of course he had not an endless number of them, so he placed every one two yards apart each way, and then, instead of leaving them to march alone, he linked them up with their wives and their children, or such

other members of their families as were not ashamed to own up before all Darkington what God had done for their loved ones, and to express their gratitude for it.

Here was Jack Nevercare, with his sweetheart, who had waited for his turning over a new leaf for years before she would marry him, and now the day had come at last. Here was Tom Hardnut and there Bill Blazeaway, while a rank or two lower down was Harry Hope-no-more, all with their wives smiling and the children looking fine; and on and on they came; and then at the very last the Captain fixed the best-known character of the crowd—indeed, one of the most notorious individuals in the whole town, and that was Dan Smashaway.

You see, Dan is a fine-looking chap, standing over six feet. The month or two of sober living he has had have given him time to get his poor body into something like order, redeem his clothes from his "Uncle's," and dress up his wife and children decently. And there he was that bright Sunday afternoon with his head up to Heaven, his eyes flashing fire, and his lips moving to the salvation song the Band was sounding out. I can tell you, Dan was the object of curiosity, and of no little pride, to the thousands who lined the streets to witness that procession. All along the line his

old mates saluted him, even some of the publicans joining in such expressions as : " Well done, Dan ! Hold on to it, old boy ! It will be good for the missis."

I have said that Dan's wife was there ; but she did not take his arm like the other poor women who hung on to their mates, no little proud to have found husbands again. Her arms were otherwise occupied, and that with the holding of a little baby-boy. But there was a woman there who held on to Dan, and whom Dan was evidently anxious to hold on to, and to hold up as well, and that was his old mother. Her dear wrinkled face showed forth the peace and satisfaction that filled her heart. God had answered her prayer. Her boy was saved.

By and by the Mayor's house was reached, to find his Worship, with all his household, at the windows. Opposite was the Vicarage, where, as Sarah looked up, she saw, with a twinkle of satisfaction in her eye—God bless her !—the clergyman who had tried to convince her that the Drunkards' Campaign was lowering the tone of our holy religion in the town.

As the procession swept between these two residences, the Band struck up the tune, and every Soldier, and every Convert, and many of the people on the side-walks joined in singing it.

The song was an old friend, and the chorus rang out :—

“His blood can make the vilest clean,
His blood avails for me.”

That was a wonderful procession, and, in my humble opinion, it can be repeated in every town in the kingdom; and Sarah says so, too.

CHAPTER XXV.

SALLY AND THE TRAINING HOME.

I HAVE had a black time lately. This often happens with me after a bright time. When I have a good go at night some trouble is almost certain to come along the next morning. Sarah says it is the devil. "You see," she says, "how full of confidence and courage we should soon be if our experience was nothing but victory; and so Satan is sure to get something ready to upset us when we have had a real hallelujah season."

"No, Sarah," I says, "it's not the devil, it's the Lord, because He sees that if we had it all our own way, always a-winnin' the day, we should get top-heavy, and soon come to grief."

Well, I have been telling you in my last chapter how that we have been going along swimmingly at Darkington Corps these last few weeks. What with the Juniors, and the Drunkards' Friends, and Sarah visiting the Converts, and some other doings, why things got so hopeful that the Millennium seemed to be just coming along; and then,

alas! a big trouble came up. This time it was your humble servant what got into a cross-current, that went very near to making a shipwreck of him and somebody else beside.

They say that open confession is good for the soul, so I'm going to make a clean breast of it, and tell you the story just as it happened—and a pretty story it is, I can assure you. Anyway, it's a story that makes me ashamed to tell it. Still, you had better have it.

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Well, you see, three years ago our daughter Sally was made a Corps Cadet. I wasn't at all eager about it at the time, and never have been since, but it was Captain Pressem that did the thing. You see, he was always a-worryin' about the Training Homes, and driving our young people mad about being Officers. Now, I don't think Sally was very hot on it herself, although she was a good little creature, bless her! but if Sally was not much set on it, her mother was, and Sarah carried the day, as she so often does. So Sally got enrolled, and started on her lessons and duties; and very well she did them all, I must say; for, although I am her father, I must tell the truth about her.

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Now, I have told you I was not very hot about

this business at the first, and as the time went on, I came to care less and less for it. You see, Sally was my youngest daughter, and I think I loved her more than the others. For one thing, she was more about me than the rest; and then, she had such nice little ways; why, bless you! she waited on me when I was down with the rheumatic fever like a regular nurse. Then, when Sarah has had her bad coughing bouts, I have thought that she might be going to Heaven some day not very far distant, as her sister did that died of a consumption; and when I have thought of that possibility, something has whispered to me how useful Sally might be in such a case, and which she couldn't if she went to be an Officer.

Besides, I'd heard things said about the Training Homes being a difficult place, and about the "hard go's" that girl-Officers have to face, and Jack has had a hard Corps, which he has made into a good one; and at last I settled in my mind that, on account of Sally not being as strong as she might be, she should stay at home, and give up all thoughts of her going to Clapton.

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That was my plan for Sally, but how was I going to persuade Sarah to come over to my way of thinking? That was the thing I had to do, and I felt it was no easy task. But it had to be

done, and I resolved on a bold course; indeed, I knew I had no other chance. So one night I said out in a strong voice:—

“Sarah, I’ve made up my mind, and I’m not going to alter ! ”

“ Alter what ? ” says Sarah.

“ About Sally,” says I.

“ What about Sally ? She is all right again ; she seems to have got rid of her cold, and to be stronger than ever I knew her.”

“ Well, I reckon I’ve the responsibility of a father, and I’m determined to do my duty by the child.”

“ Very good, I’m her mother,” said Sarah, “ and I reckon I shall try and do mine. But, pray, what have you resolved upon, Sergeant-Major ? ” said Sarah. “ Are you going to buy her a new uniform with that overtime money ? ”

“ No,” said I, “ it’s something more important than that. I’m fully resolved that Sally shall not go to the Training Home.”

“ Not going to the Training Home ! ” says Sarah. “ Not going to the Training Home ! ” and she fairly gasped again.

“ No, she’s not, Sarah. You see she was very young, and did not know what she was doing when she gave her word, and her health’s not been good, and there’s many hardships to be gone

through; and Sergeant Grumbleton has advised me to seek some lighter employment for her; and Deacon Haberdasham has promised to take her into his establishment and teach her the business, and he thinks she will make a good shopwoman and attract customers; and I've never fully approved of her being an Officer; and, besides all this, I'm growing older, and so are you, and if anything happened, I'd like Sally to be here or close by to look after me a little."

"Sergeant-Major," says Sarah, taking me up rather sharp like, "I'm ashamed of you. Have you taken leave of your senses? Whatever will the Captain say, and the Divisional Officer say, and the Soldiers say, and Colonel Scour-the-land say, and what will Jesus Christ say, and what will your conscience say to this going back on all your promises?"

Well, I was going to say right out: "I don't care what anybody says!" But I didn't say it, and I'm glad I didn't, because it would not have been the truth, because what Sarah said made me feel awful bad, and I felt I must either end the argument or give in, which I'd made up my mind I wouldn't do. And so I just struck the table with my fist ever so hard, and said with a loud voice: "Well, Sarah, I've given you my reasons, and I don't want any more arguments about it."

"But, Sergeant-Major," said Sarah, "you've given your word, and Sally's given her word, and Sally's mother has given her word; and, whatever Sally's father may say or do, Sally's mother's not going to draw back. Sally's going to be an Officer, and you are going to send her away with your blessing, and be proud of having had a chance of doing so in time and in eternity, or I'm not the wife of Sergeant-Major Do-your-best."

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Time went on. Again and again Sarah raised the question, but I simply said I wouldn't have any more arguments, because my mind was made up. And so it was, for one of those stupid fits that so often made me make such a fool of myself before I was converted had come over me, and no matter what was said, I refused to yield.

Sally was a bit obstreperous at first. But when she saw that I was determined, she consented, and the prospect of going into Deacon Haberdasham's place pleased her fancy very much. She had hardly got there, however, before she gave up wearing her uniform, going to the Open-Air, and selling her "War Crys," and a lot of other duties which, I must say, was a little trouble to me. Because, you see, I had believed what Grumbleton had said, that she could be a useful Local, do the Juniors, and go to Heaven without being an

Officer. But as for Sarah, she fretted over the matter night and day, in spite of all I could say. Indeed, it seemed to me sometimes that she would break her heart over it, and I thought it was a great pity to make such a to-do over so small a thing.

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Now, you know that there's wheels within wheels, and when I made up my mind that Sally should not be an Officer, I never thought of what was going to come out of my resolution. If I had done, I should certainly have acted very differently.

Well, you see, Sally had a chum, and her name was Patty Featherhead, and these two were regular bosom friends. They had grown up side by side, attending the same school, been members of the same Junior Company, and now they were Corps Cadets together. Indeed, they were seldom apart. They went to the same meeting, sat side by side on the same bench, and when you saw one you always expected that the other was not very far away.

Patty was a light-hearted, merry-souled creature. She could do a good talk, sing a nice song, and, considering that she was rather pretty looking and strong for her years, she seemed to have the making of a useful Officer in her. But although

she was good and clever, and nearly two years older than Sally, she hadn't got over much backbone in her. On the contrary, she was weak, and easily led astray. And when Sally told her that I had made up my mind that she was not to be an Officer, and asked Patty's advice about the matter, she made up her mind that she would not be an Officer either, and they both agreed that they would give up all thoughts of the Training Home for the present, and stay in Darkington, and serve God together as Local Officers.

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Deacon Haberdasham was only too glad to take the two girls into his employment; and they soon got fixed up behind the counter of the retail part of his great establishment. At the first the change was very agreeable. Everybody was kind to them. They had more pocket-money, got better clothes, and had more liberty than they had ever had before. So they walked about the town, were in high spirits, attracted the attention of the young men about them, and seemed to be in quite a jolly state of mind. But Sarah was sad at heart, and cautioned Sally continually, and prayed for her without ceasing; but she seemed to be powerless to prevent the sorrow that she could not help fearing might be coming upon her darling child.

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Meanwhile, I must confess that I didn't get on well myself. I was uneasy in my conscience. I had many doubts as to whether I had done the right thing in keeping Sally back from the work to which she had been offered, and then I could not keep the question from my heart: "What if she should backslide and desert the Corps, and go to the fashionable church which Patty's family attended? and, most of all, what if the girl should chuck religion up altogether?"

And then there was a cloud came up between me and Sarah, and there never had been any difference between us that had lasted more than an hour or two since the day we were converted, and now we often ate and drank together, and scarcely spoke; and then I got bad in my health, and I went to the doctor, and took pills and powders. But they did not seem to do me any good.

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I don't think there can be any doubt that Sally is a backslider. It's just awful. She won't go to the meetings. She never reads her Bible, which she used to do regular as the clock, and I don't think she prays when she is by herself; and she will keep company and go to places that can't do her any good. Then, what seems dreadful, when her mother tries to talk to her she goes into

tempers, and tells her plain that she's old enough to judge such things for herself.

I heard some of the things she was saying the other day when I was shaving, and I says to her after I had done : "Sally," says I, "this is very cruel treatment of your mother, who has loved you so much, and worked for you so long. If you don't mind, you'll break her heart, and bring my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

At which she just looked up at me, and said : "Well, father, I suppose it is not just the thing, but it's all your fault."

"My fault!" says I. "Haven't I ____."

But she interrupted me, and, in quite a pert manner, she says : "Yes, it is your fault. You shouldn't have made me break my vows, and stopped me going to the Training Home."

I can tell you I did feel bad after that.

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Here's bad news. Patty Featherhead has gone, and nobody knows where! She's been strangely altered now for some time, and, since she got engaged to Tom Swellington, she's given up the meetings, and made no pretensions to religion. You see, she's had nobody at home to hold her in check a little, and she's gone down hill, until she's become one of the fastest, flightiest girls in Darkington.

The Captain sought her out several times, but she would not listen to him at all; indeed, I couldn't have believed that anyone so young and so good could possibly have turned round and got so hardened all at once. When Sarah tried to talk to her at her own place—for she's left home and gone to lodgings—she told her plump that she had better mind her own business, because whatever had come about, had all been along of her daughter Sally; and that if it hadn't been for her she should have been in the Training Home by this.

Was not that awful? It went into me like a knife when Sarah told me. How much more awful it seemed a day or two after, you may guess, when we found that Tom Swellington had disappeared as well, and that there wasn't a doubt in anybody's mind but that he and poor Patty had gone away together.

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Patty has returned, but, Oh! what a return it is! What had been imagined in Darkington was quite correct. Tom had promised to marry her when he was here, but kept putting it off, and then he said if she would go with him to London, the event could be pulled off there. But when he got her there days and days passed, and he had always some excuse for not doing as he

had said, and then he left her without a friend all alone in that great city.

Poor Patty! She passed the time weeping, and hoping that he would come back, for ever so long, but it was all in vain; and then she got rid of her bits of finery to pay the rent of her room, and then through fretting and hunger, and a broken heart, she fell sick, and, in despair, sold everything she had left to get enough to pay her fare back to Darkington. And late one night she tapped at the door of her father's house, and asked to be taken in as she was so sick. But he refused even to see her, and sent her out a message that she must go elsewhere to be nursed. He would never see her again.

In her despair she thought of Sarah, and in the darkness, with feeble footsteps, the poor thing, half dead, stole round to our house, and with trembling fingers, knocked at the door. Sarah opened it, and though reduced to a mere skeleton, recognised her in a moment, took her in her arms, and led her in.

I was out late at the Outpost that night, and on my return, before I had well got off my hat and coat, Sarah said: "Sergeant-Major, I want you to go upstairs with me." The tears were in her eyes. I could not tell what was the matter with her; but I felt as if something had happened,

and I followed her. Instead of going into our room, which is in the front, she turned round into what used to be Sally's chamber, and there, on the little bed where I had so often kissed Sally "good-night," lay the wasted form of Patty.

It was soon plain to everybody that had anything to do with her that Patty had come home to die. The doctor said so. He wondered how ever she had been able to do the journey. It was plain to Sarah, and she knows such things by instinct, but it was plainest of all to Patty herself. She felt sure her race was run; she had thrown away her chance, and had now the solemn duty to fulfil of appearing before her Lord to give an account of herself.

News of Patty's return was soon noised abroad. It was talked about at the Corps, for everybody knew her there. It soon reached Deacon Haberdasham's place, and there was one countenance in that establishment that fell, and one heart that almost stopped beating, when the whisper reached her that Patty Featherhead, broken in health and spirit, had come back to Darkington to die.

That one was our Sally. The depth of the impression made on Sally's heart by this melancholy news was noways lessened when she heard that Patty's father had refused to take her in, and

that Sarah, her own mother, had opened her door and laid her in the little chamber where she had herself spent so many happy hours.

All this finished Sally, and before the regular hour of closing came she was once more at home. She had not been there for many a day. There had been a gulf between mother and daughter. But that gulf vanished away as Sally walked into the old house, threw herself into her mother's arms, asked forgiveness, and found it. Then, with her mother's kisses warm on her cheek, she was soon kneeling by the bedside of Patty. That was a wonderful meeting.

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Patty grows worse daily. The doctor says she cannot last long. Sally has left the millinery establishment for good. She has made herself Patty's nurse, and a faithful, tender creature she is in a sick chamber, as I've proved myself. She clings to the hope of nursing her back to life, and of yet going with her hand-in-hand to the Training Home. But, alas! it is only a dream. Patty is marked to die. Her opportunity of training on earth is gone.

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Patty has disappeared again. This time we know where she has gone, and the way she went. We did not see her go through the Pearly Gates

with our natural eyes, but very nearly so. I shall never forget her last hours while my life lasts. They were a lesson to me.

Early one morning Sarah woke me. "Sergeant-Major," she said, "if you want to see the last of Patty in this world, you must come along sharp. She has entered the Valley; she'll soon be through."

I was not long getting there. Sally was holding Patty's hand, and you could see the end was near. Her voice was little more than a whisper; and yet there was wonderful force in all her looks and words.

"Sally," she said, "I want to say something to you. I have said it before, but I want to say it again, and to say it so that the Sergeant-Major and your mother can hear."

Sally bent over her, and kissed her forehead, saying: "Yes, Patty, I will remember every word you say, and do whatever you ask me."

"Sally," she said, "it was my fault about our not going to the Training Home. It was me that made you go back on your word."

"No, no!" said Sally; "it was not you; it was me that was to blame."

"No, no!" said Patty. "Listen. It was me that had got drawn away by the vanities and pleasures of the world. You see, I wanted an

easier life than an Army Officer's seemed to be, and I whispered things to you, and instead of encouraging you to stick to your vows, and listen to your mother, I helped you to go the other way."

Sally wanted to speak again. She wished to take, at least, her share of the blame. Then I wanted to say : "No, Patty, I'm the guiltiest of all. It's Sally's father that has spoiled your life, and been the cause of your death." But I couldn't get a word out. My tongue wouldn't act ! Besides, we all saw that the cold hand of death was on the child, and, in our desire to hear her last words, we let her go on.

"Sally," she said, "you must go back to the Corps, and confess your backslidings. I know the Lord's forgiven you. He did it—bless His name ! —in this little chamber, in which your dear mother's given me the privilege to die. But you must go to the mercy-seat, and confess your backslidings before your old comrades, and tell them you've come back to the Corps to pay your vows, and live for God. And, Sally, mind, you must go to the mercy-seat for me as well, and say the same for me."

Then, summoning all her remaining strength, she added : "Sergeant-Major, tell the young people to be careful to pay their vows. The paths of life are very slippery. Mine was. I didn't take

care, and so I fell. But God has picked me up again. I am going into His presence, but *I've lost my crown.*"

Then, while a sudden brightness lit up her countenance, she went on : "*Sally, mind nobody steals yours.* You must be an Officer, and do your work, and meet me in the Morning."

And then the darkness fell. Patty was gone, and Sally has started again for the Training Home, and I shall give her my blessing when she goes away.

CHAPTER XXVI.

SELLING THE PAPERS.

WE'VE kept on doing well at Darkington since. The death of Patty Featherhead, and the Memorial Service that followed, had a great effect. One of the things that happened was that Annie Andleton, one of Sally's old schoolmates, came to the penitent-form, saying as how as she wanted to fill Patty's place, and be Sally's chum, and be a Corps Cadet, and live a useful life.

That's what it should be, and it pleased us all very much. One goeth, and another cometh. Annie is a fine girl, and the Treasurer says she has started well, with a good cartridge.

Take it altogether, I never remember the Corps being in such a promising state. There's all the money that's needed. We've done up the Hall, and made the Officers' Quarters comfortable, paid our debts, and got some new instruments for the Band, and handed a surplus over to the Divisional Officer.

Then the congregations are capital. You have to be there in time on a Sunday night to get a seat. Everybody's contented, and even the old grumblers say they never saw it on this fashion at Darkington before; they only hope it will last.

I say everybody's contented, except Sarah, and she's about as far from being satisfied as ever I knew her, if not a little farther.

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We had an argument a week or two ago over our supper about what I call *our prosperity*. I had got home a little earlier than usual, as Sergeant Boozham had been lending me a hand at my work, as he does sometimes nowadays, which comes in very useful, as I am getting a little older.

Well, as soon as I had said grace, Sarah she plumps out at me after this fashion. "Sergeant-Major," says she, "What are you going to do for this awful Darkington place? I can't rest neither day nor night for thinking about its wickedness."

"Sarah," I says, "I thought we were doing a good deal for Darkington, and that our doings had been crowned with wonderful success. Look at the condition of the Corps."

"No!" said she, rather sharply. "Look at the condition of the town."

"But," says I, "there's a great deal of good work going on."

"But," says she, "how much *bad* work is there going on? Look at the drink-shops, and music-halls, and gambling dens, and brothels, and little hells of one kind or another that are in full blast at this very moment while we are sitting here. And then, as to the good work that is being done, and the good people that's around us, I don't want to deny it at all; but," says she, "you know you daren't reckon up yourself, Sergeant-Major, the number of the people of Darkington who are serving the devil, and travelling along the road to destruction." And then she says: "Surely you are not going to rest content with all this sin, and misery, and devilry going on. What are you going to do?"

"Well, Sarah," I says, "what can we do? Don't we do the Open-Air, and the indoor meetings, and ——?"

"Yes," she says, interrupting me, "I know you do. But what else are you going to do?"

"But what else *can* we do?" says I.

"Well, I'll tell you one thing you can do, Sergeant-Major. You can sell them blessed papers; they'll help to shake things up. Sell 'The War Cry' and 'The Young Soldier,' 'The Y.P.,' and 'The Social Gazette,' and all the rest of them. Sell the papers, instead of having them filling up the cupboards, so that I can't find a

spot to keep the bits of things for my Mothers' Meetings.

"The hall-keeper's been telling me that every place he has is pretty well filled up with them. Why, he says that the hole underneath the porch, where he has to keep his coke for the stove, is stuffed half full of 'Social Gazettes,' and he don't know whatever he will do when the winter comes round. Sell the papers, send them out, give them wings, let them fly abroad. Sell the papers, Sergeant-Major—that's what I say. Sell the papers."

You see, Sarah's what you may call eddicated. And, as she says, "The War Cry," and the rest of them, do her so much good, she's sure they'll do other people good. Indeed, she declares that nobody could keep on reading them without being saved, and made into good Soldiers of The Army. So she says: "If you want to do something to move this place, as well as all the other things you do, Sergeant-Major, sell the papers."

But at this point I asks the question: "Now, come, Sarah, don't be unreasonable; don't we sell the papers?"

"No," she says; "you don't half sell them. Look what puffing and blowing the shopkeepers do to sell their goods. Think of the advertising and shouting that's done to make people buy 'The

Daily Sensation,' which says one thing one day, and contradicts it the next. Then think of the quiet, happy-go-lucky way you go along with your papers, which often means happiness or misery, life or death, God or the devil, to those who read them. When I think of the half-hearted fashion you go about the business, it makes my blood tingle, and I feel ashamed to think that you should have such a chance of waking up the people, and yet make so little of it."

"Well," says I, "it is certainly true that we used to sell more papers in the Hall than we do now, but we found it spoiled the meetings—and the meeting is the first consideration, isn't it, Sarah?"

She nodded; so I went over the whole story of our past experience with the papers, which she knew as well as I did myself. But she let me talk, and I felt I must say something in self-defence, and I would like to tell you what I did say.

"Well," I said, "there was Captain Sold-out. You remember him, bless him! I wonder where he is to-day. Well, he prided himself on clearing every blessed thing out by Sunday night. He would have them all up. There was first 'The War Cry,' then 'The Young Soldier,' and then 'The Social Gazette,' and, if there were any left, he would stand at the Hall door as the

people went out, and make them buy them, whether they wanted them or not. It was papers, papers, papers, till everybody was sick of them.

"Then Captain Boanerges came along, and he was all the other way, and announced right off that he wouldn't have so much time taken up with the papers. He said it spoiled the meetings, and it was opposed to The General's ideas, and he had come there to pray and tell the truth, and not to sell papers.

"This plan, you know, upset our dear old Publication-Sergeant Jim Touch-and-go awfully. He said it meant a fearful drop in the circulation right away, and he ventured to reason with the Captain. But it was no use. 'What are we to do, then, with the papers?' he asked him. 'Do what you like with them,' said the Captain; 'but I won't let them spoil my meetings.'

"On this Touch-and-go threw up his post, and we were worse off than ever, for nobody would take his place. But the Captain, he held to his decision, and announced that now he expected every Soldier to do his share in selling the papers.

"Now, anybody could foretell what the result of this would be. What was everybody's business was nobody's, and so we've drifted on from that

day to this, and I must confess that we've come miserably short with the publications. But what else can we do? "

"Do," says Sarah, taking up her talk just where she left off—just as if I hadn't given all these reasons—which was very trying to me. "What must you do?" says she. "You must sell the papers."

"And begin spoiling the meetings again, and setting everybody against the papers worse than ever," says I.

"Sergeant-Major," says Sarah, "I am surprised at a man of your sense talking like this. Of course, you mustn't spoil the meetings, but you must sell the papers all the same. Didn't Captain Logicum teach us that the abuse of a custom was no argument against the use of it? Because Captain Sold-out acted in such a stupid manner, and because Captain Boanerges couldn't find a remedy without shutting down on the sales, is that any reason why we should not find a proper plan of doing our duty? I tell you the papers have to be sold, and that without interfering with any other good work; and if nobody else can find a way of doing it, the Sergeant-Major must."

"But how is it to be done, Sarah?" I answered. I was rather sharp now, I must confess, for my patience was fast giving out.

"How is it to be done? Get a proper Publication-Sergeant, who will understand the work, and have the courage to do it."

"But who is it to be?" says I.

"Well," she says, "if you've nobody else for the post, there's Sally. It's true she's young; but she's got a heart for anything, and with her father, the Sergeant-Major of the Corps, behind her, and her mother to give her a hint now and then, I think she'll manage things better, anyway, than they are managed now."

* * * * *

Sally is Publication-Sergeant. The Captain was real pleased with the proposal. Bless him! he's willing for anything. What he can't do himself, either for want of time, or experience, or ability, he's only too glad for anyone else to do. Ever since the thing was settled on, Sally has been studying the *Orders*, with her mother's help, and they've been concocting some new ones of their own I fancy, to make the others fit the Darkington Corps and neighbourhood all the better.

* * * * *

The Captain announced a special Soldiers' Meeting for the Tuesday night following, saying that, after reading The General's Letter, a matter of great importance to the Corps and the town of Darkington would be brought before them. The

Soldiers were curious to know what new thing was on the boards, and came up in great force.

When the time arrived, the Captain explained that the Corps was about to enter on a new dispensation with respect to the Army literature. He said he was ashamed of its present position, and to bring about better things a Publication-Sergeant had been appointed, which was Sally Do-your-best. That, though young in years, she had a good stock of enthusiasm, and would have the guidance of her father, the Sergeant-Major, and her mother, Sarah.

On this announcement there was a great clapping, and so on. I was somewhat puzzled to know whether this expression of approval was intended for Sally, or her mother, or your humble servant. Perhaps there was a little for each of us. Anyway, I am sure they were all pleased to find that Sarah was going to have a finger in the pie.

The Captain said that he thought that each party named ought to have a word, and he would begin with the youngest. Sally made a few very modest remarks, saying she was going to do her best, and as she had made up her mind to push the sales outside the Hall, she should want the assistance of as many of her comrades as could lend her a hand.

Then Sarah got up, and they gave her such a

reception as made me think as she was the one as they would like to be Sergeant-Major instead of poor me. However, she made quite a nice little speech. At least I thought so, for she warmed my poor old heart, and no mistake.

This is about what she said, but such talk as Sarah's can't be repeated, I can tell you. There's only one way to appreciate it, and that is to hear it. After she had got fairly started, she said :—

“ Captain and comrades, I want us all to join hearts and hands and prayers together to sell these blessed papers.

“ What are they printed for, I want to know, with all these pictures, and all these stories of love and mercy, and all these accounts of The Army's doings all round the world? What are they printed for? that's what I want to know. To make somebody rich, or get the praise of men? No! they are printed to save souls and glorify Jesus Christ, who died for us all.

“ But what's the use of printing them, if they don't get passed round? Will anybody be converted, or saved higher up, or have their hearts filled with the Holy Ghost, as mine has been many a time in reading that blessed 'War Cry,' if they are not put in their hands? And who is to do the work but us Soldiers? They are wonderful papers. In my opinion, there's nothing half as good on the

face of the earth; but they've not got wings to fly with, nor feet to walk with—so if they are to do their work we must carry them round.

"But somebody has been saying that the people won't read them, if they do buy them. But that's not true, my comrades. Don't we read them ourselves?" (A volley—the best Soldiers in the Corps all saying: "Yes, we do.") "Don't I read them myself? Yes, I read 'The War Cry' from cover to cover every week of my life. But some one says: 'Do nobody but Soldiers read it?' Yes. Didn't Commissioner Tucker read that Christmas 'War Cry' that the Lord sent right into his way when he was in the very middle of India, and did it not make a Salvationist of him?—and see what thousands of souls he has won since then.

"And didn't my cousin Joe in America meet with a 'War Cry' when he was all made up to go in for business, and become rich, and all that; and didn't he turn his back on it all; and hasn't he been an Officer for years; and besides, everybody knows that hundreds and thousands have been converted through reading the blessed 'War Cry!'

"Isn't this the heart's desire of the dear old General, that you're always a-wondering why he doesn't give Darkington a look-in in his wanderings to and fro, and hoping that our time will come

—which I hope it will—and that I shall live to see it? (Tremendous volley.) Now, if you want to please The General, and get him to give us a week-end, sell the papers.

“ If you want to help the blessed Army, sell the papers.

“ If you want to talk to the hearts of the sinners round about you, sell the papers: they will talk for you.

“ If you want to have a little conversation with a stranger, offer him a paper.

“ If you want to call home a backslider, sell him a paper.

“ If you want to bless the children, sell their mother or father a paper.

“ Comrades, we want Brigades to visit every public-house for a mile round the Hall. We want Brigades that will canvass for orders, and then other Brigades that will carry ‘The War Cry’ to whoever will order it.

“ Comrades, I want brothers and sisters who will help Sally.” Here she broke down, and could say no more.

And then in answer to the Captain’s call, we fell on our knees and asked the Saviour to bless the new Publication-Sergeant and all her schemes for selling the papers.

• • • • •

The sales of the papers have gone up. We are not very far from being the Champion Corps in the Province. The meetings have not been spoiled either. We only sing out of the papers once in each meeting, and as the Hall is divided up, and a Soldier has "The War Crys" ready for each division, there is no confusion. Almost every one buys regular as clockwork; and so, you see, the Corps sales have advanced because every Soldier has been hunted up. Still the great increase we have had is from the outside sales.

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There is one sad spot in this happy improvement. Poor old Jim Touch-and-go, the late Publication-Sergeant, is sadly put out. He never got over the rough-and-ready way in which Captain Boanerges took him at his word when he threw up his job. It was rather heavy on him, I must confess, as he had struggled hard in all weathers, and with many discouragements, for five years with his duties; and to be as good as told that he could be done without, in such an unseemly way, nearly broke his heart.

Then, I think, he rather thought that he ought to have been asked to take up the work again; but that would have been very unwise. However willing, he was quite unfit for the position. You see, he is getting old, and his health is broken.

Moreover, he has drawn off very much from the Corps, not coming to the meetings very often, and when he did come, he would always make off early. In fact, he was a disappointed man, and no kindness could bring him round again.

Then the poor old man has a sorrow that has cut far deeper into his heart than the loss of his post as Publication-Sergeant could do. He has a prodigal son.

Yes, Frank was the pride of his father's heart, but he got into loose company, and for a long time drank heavily in secret. He had good situations, but lost them one after the other, and then he broke right out, and friends and strangers alike saw that he was a confirmed drunkard.

It was such a pity. Everybody was sorry for him. He had grown up amongst us from a boy, and he was so clever, and so respectable. We all made up our minds that if he would only get saved he would turn out something remarkable.

Then there was not only him and his old father, but his wife and child. His wife fretted day and night, and hid the thing from the little girl as long as she could. But the truth leaked out, and the child came to understand that her own father, whom she had been taught to love, was a slave of the drink. Quick and intelligent, although only seven or eight years of age, she took in the miser-

able situation, and felt the disgrace of the thing keenly, and shared the distress of her broken-hearted mother.

He was not given up all at once. Oh, no; many efforts were made; but our hopes were dashed, and our plans all failed, and his pledges were all broken again and again; and the home, once so glad and cheerful, became the dwelling-place of despair. Frank, though young, was, to all appearance, a drunkard beyond human help.

• • • • •

One night Sally was out with a Drunkards' Friend Brigade. It was late, and the round was not complete, and her comrades were hurrying forward to get at "The Rose and Thorn," which was the last house on their list.

But Sally lingered outside "The Pig and Whistle," hoping to get another word with Frank, to whom she had already spoken in the bar. At last out he came. But he was too far gone to appreciate anything she could say. He would not even buy a "War Cry." At last she thought of his little girl, and pulling out a "Young Soldier," she said: "Here's a paper for dear little Winnie. Only a halfpenny. Take it to her." Frank burst out with a bad word, gave her a penny, stuffed the paper in his pocket, and reeled on after his companions.

The following night being Sunday, mother and Winnie were sitting at home together. The mother was sad with thoughts about Frank, and, to cheer her up a little, the child brought out "The Young Soldier" that her father had bought the night before, and asked her to read her a story out of it. The mother read the account of the conversion of some poor drunken fellow :—

"Mother," said Winnie, "if God saved that poor man, couldn't He save dadda?"

"Yes, my dear, He could!" Her eyes filling with tears at the thought. "I'm sure He could!"

"Does God answer people when they pray to Him, mother?" the child went on.

"Yes, Winnie, the Lord answers prayer. I'm sure He does!" thinking of the lessons her own dear mother had taught her in the happy days gone by.

"If we asked Him just now to save dadda, would He hear us?"

"Yes!" the mother said with a little hesitation, remembering how often before she had asked Him to save Frank, "perhaps He would!"

"Let us ask Him just now then," said Winnie. And down she knelt, her mother joining in, and, together with tears and cries, they called on the name of the Lord in this the day of their trouble.

"Lord!" cried the child, "save dadda from

the wicked drink, and the wicked people, and the wicked places, and make him just like this father we've been reading about ! ”

“ Amen ! ” said the broken-hearted mother, “ Save my husband; save my poor Frank. Do ! do ! do ! ”

At the very hour this precious little prayer meeting was being held in Frank's cottage, Frank himself was passing our Hall.

All the doors and windows were wide open, for the place was crowded, and the night was warm, and out on to the evening air came the chorus, repeated over and over and over again :—

“ Will you go, will you go,
Oh, say, will you go to the Eden above ? ”

He hated the place. He used to be a regular visitor there when a boy. But since the devil had got possession of his heart he positively cursed the very name of The Salvation Army.

But now a strange impulse, which he could not resist, urged him to enter, and he stepped inside.

Boozham was hanging round the entrance singing with all his might, and yet keeping his eye on the door. He saw Frank come in, and sprang for him, like a cat does for a mouse; and before he knew where he was, Boozham had Frank's hand

in his iron grip, and he found himself following him. A few moments more and he was seated by his side.

The meeting was just like many other meetings. Frank needed but little persuasion and less instruction. He knew what he ought to do only too well. Ever since he entered the place, picture after picture of the past, like one long panoramic roll, had been passing before the eyes of his mind, until at last his Saviour—dying for him on the cross, while he, a rebel, was trampling on His precious blood—stood before him.

When the moment for action came, Frank went down with the old-fashioned cry : “ God, be merciful to me a sinner.” But he had not knelt long before there was another cry, more piercing than his own, and another fall, and this time by his side, while a couple of strong arms enfolded him. What did it mean ?

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His father, poor old Touch-and-go, sitting in his old sulky place near the door, saw Frank enter. He had not seen him for many a day gone by ; and as he passed him so hurriedly he was not even certain that it was him or no. And if it was Frank, what could he do ? He would wait, and see what would happen. He soon found that something out of the common was going on at the other end of

the Hall, and a strange agitation came over him. He trembled from head to foot. Could it possibly be that it was Frank, and that he had at last given in? It was too good to be true. They soon brought him the news, and as it fell on his ears his heart broke; the black past was all forgiven, and rushing up the Hall hurriedly, he threw himself on Frank with the cry: "My son was dead, and is alive again; was lost, and is found."

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Then there was the return home—the happy wife, the child beside herself with joy, the tidings running through the town, the rejoicing Corps, the angels' song, the gladdened heart of Jesus Christ. It was, taken altogether, too much; a great deal too much, to describe; but much as it was, in the estimation of God and man, Sarah will have it that it was all through *selling the papers*.

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